THE TWO JAPANESE PRODUCTIONS OF *MACBETH*:

AKIRA KUROSAWA'S *THRONE OF BLOOD* AND YUKIO NINAGAWA'S *NINAGAWA'S MACBETH*

by

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SYNOPSIS

Among productions of Shakespeare's plays in recent years, some cultural adaptations by Asian and other foreign directors are more highly regarded than English productions which use the original texts. Two such productions are *Throne of Blood*, a film directed by Akira Kurosawa in 1957, and *Ninagawa's Macbeth*, a stage production by Yukio Ninagawa in 1980, (first staged in Tokyo, in Edinburgh in 1985, and in London 1987).

The significance of these foreign productions is how they revive the power of Shakespeare's originals energetically in their different cultural, social, religious and linguistic context. These two Japanese productions of *Macbeth* show the examples of those productions which succeeded in transforming and reviving the power of the play into their own tradition. To understand the Japanese re-interpretation of the play, the viewer or the audience must learn about the cultural background, which describes Shakespeare's play from the Eastern point of view.

Western representatives of productions of the play are, on film, Orson Welles and Roman Polanski, and on stage, Trevor Nunn. Through consideration of these western productions, the originality and uniqueness of the Japanese adaptations of the play can be seen. The intensity and suspense of the drama are most impressively expressed in their own Japanese cultural context. It can be said that the encounter of the East and the West brings another aspect to the interpretation of Shakespeare's drama as performance. (36,644 words)

INTRODUCTION

Throne of Blood (*Kumonosu-jo*, 1957) by Akira Kurosawa is one of the most successful Shakespearean films, although it is a complete adaptation of *Macbeth* and does not use the language of the original text at all. Some critics do not regard this adaptation as comparable with other Shakespearean films in his own language, and they try to categorize the film as a Japanese *samurai* version of the play. They frequently misunderstand the Japanese cultural background of the film, for they try too hard to authenticate the original play.

There must be a way to understand the film more properly, if the viewer knows its cultural background in more detail. The viewer will know how the director Kurosawa understands and revitalizes the essence of the play far better than most of the other film makers who have attempted to film the play.

Yukio Ninagawa is also one of the most representative Japanese directors who sought to adapt Shakespeare's plays within a Japanese cultural context, not on screen, but on stage. He brought his production of *Macbeth* to England in 1987 for a theatrical festival called 'the International Theatre '87'', organized by the director of the National Theatre, Sir Peter Hall. The festival aimed to stimulate British theatre by inviting eminent directors from abroad, such as Peter Stein, Ingmar Bergman, etc. Ninagawa presented Shakespeare's *Macbeth* with Euripides's *Medea* during the festival, and both of them were greatly admired for the completeness of his staging. Although they were performed in Japanese, his productions were unprecedentedly applauded by English audiences. In particular, his *Macbeth* was a great success in Shakespeare's own country.

These two directors: Kurosawa and Ninagawa, who are from different fields, very interestingly, seek for the same principle to direct their works in the context of Japanese culture. Kurosawa says:

> . . . In this film the problem was how to adapt the story to Japanese thinking. The story is understandable enough but the Japanese tend to think differently about such things as witches and ghosts.[1]

And also Ninagawa questions:

> To start with, a problem is rhetoric. Shakespeare's rhetoric mostly goes upward: Heaven or God. In Japan, that kind of rhetoric is rarely read. If we replace the rhetoric, which is too difficult for Japanese people to understand, with something visual . . . . . , what will become of it?[2]

Both directors, in their first stage of directing the play in either a film or a stage production, try to make it easy for the Japanese viewer or audience to understand the things that come from the different cultural background of Shakespeare. It is interesting to know that, though they are directed for Japanese people, both of the works are more appreciated in foreign countries than in Japan.

Probably, one of the reasons is that, to the foreign audience, the oriental cultural adaptation of a Shakespeare's play is found exotic and brand new in a visual sense, but there must be other reasons why so many critics have sought to analyze the attractiveness of those works. Among European critics, however, there are some people who misinterpret or overvalue them, not knowing well the Japanese cultural background or climate, on which the directors created their own *Macbeth*.

In the first two chapters of this thesis, I would like to explain the cultural background of those works in detail as a means of footnoting the productions for those who are not familiar with Japanese culture.

In the third chapter, I will compare the film and the stage production with other western productions of the play: on films, Orson Welles's *Macbeth* (1948) and Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* (1969), and on stage, Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* (1976), and clarify what is characteristic of the Japanese adaptations and what is their uniqueness when compared to the western productions.

Let me first introduce the biographical background of the two Japanese directors.

Akira Kurosawa

Akira Kurosawa was born in Tokyo in 1910. He intended to be a painter in his youth, while involved with some radical political activities of communism. He sustained his interest in the cinema through the influence of his elder brother, who was a *benshi* (a narrator of silent films) at that time. After he passed the highly competitive entrance examinations for Toho Studios, then called the Photo Chemical Laboratories, he started his film career as assistant director to Kajiro Yamamoto in 1936. His debut film as a director was *Judo Saga* (*Sugata Sanshiro*) in 1943. And later he won the top prize of the Venice Festival in 1951 with his literary adaptation film, *Rashomon*. He became a world famous film director for that.

His adaptations of western literature are as follows: Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (*Hakuchi*, 1951), Gorky's *The Lower Depths* (*Donzoko*, 1957), Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into *Throne of Blood* (*Kumonosu-jo*, 1957), Ed Mcbain's *The Bad Sleep Well* (*Warui Yatsu Hodo Yoku Nemuru*, 1960), and again Shakespeare's *King Lear* (*Ran*, 1980)

His films are strictly based on Japanese culture, but his sources from western literature make his films unique, and different from other Japanese film directors like Ozu or Mizoguchi who adhere to the Japanese tradition of the cinema.

Yukio Ninagawa

He started his career as an actor after he graduated from high school in 1955. He once had an ambition to study painting at Tokyo Art University (Gei-dai), but changed direction to be an actor, and entered a theatrical company called 'Gekidan Seihai'. He used to feel frustrated about the shortage of good directors in the company, which gave him the idea of becoming a director on his own.

He set up his own small fringe company when he left 'Seihai' in 1966, and staged avant-garde productions until 1973. The young audience greatly admired his work and the success led him to the commercial theatre of Toho in 1974. His first production in Toho was a revolutionary production of *Romeo and Juliet* which made use of Elton John's rock and roll music. He went on to produce such works as *Oedipus Rex*, *Love Suicides of Chikamatsu*, *A Streetcar Called Desire*, *Medea*, and others.

He first staged his Japanese *Macbeth* at the Nissei Theatre in February 1980, and it was presented in London for the first time at the National Theatre's Lyttleton Theatre in September 1987. He was nominated for an Olivier award for the production, and was recently appointed as deputy art director of the Globe Theatre in London.

The Background of the Japanese Cinema and Theatre

Before discussing Kurosawa and Ninagawa, I would like to explore some of the background of Japanese cinema and theatre, which might help the reader to understand the works in their own context. In Japan, the cinema and the theatre are different industries unlike England. While British directors sometimes produce their works in both media, in Japan, film directors and stage directors work in separate fields. So Kurosawa has never produced stage productions and Ninagawa has never been involved with films.

The Japanese cinema started around 1900. At that time only thirty years had passed since the Meiji Restoration (*Meiji Ishin*, 1868) had released Japan from the feudalistic situation of the national isolation policy during the *Edo* period. The conscience of the people was moving toward the modernization and westernization of the society, but the change in their taste for literature and drama was slow.

Films were made for the entertainment for the people, and therefore they used to tend to be based on traditional drama such as *kabuki* and *kodan* (historical stories). In both types of drama, a *samurai* is always a hero and the theme is his loyalty for his lord or revenge for his parents' death. Japanese society did not consider the idea of making films, which are only entertainment for the masses, as a proper occupation that people should engage in. The Japanese conservative ideas about film lasted for decades.

It is very natural for Kurosawa to have made a Shakespeare's play into a *samurai* film in that kind of situation, though the film industry had much improved by the time he made the film in 1957.

In the Japanese theatre, however, Shakespeare was performed abroad by a Japanese company led by Otojiro Kawakami in 1901. Henry Irving, impressed with their adaptation

of *The Merchant of Venice* in Boston, invited them to London. They made a great success for the show "*Geisha* and *Samurai*", and were invited to Buckingham Palace by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). And then they went over to Paris.

They provided great inspiration to many European artists during their tour. In particular, the dancing of Kawakami's wife, Yakko Sada, in the show, became so popular and later she made her debut into society in Paris. A perfume called "Yakko" was sold. Among those who were inspired by their performance, were famous artists like Debussy, Picasso, Rodin, etc.

Probably, their production of *The Merchant of Venice* was the first *kabuki* version of Shakespeare by a Japanese company. After the Kawakami company, authentic *kabuki* plays were introduced to foreign countries, first by Sadanji Ichikawa in the Soviet Union in 1928. After Kawakami, however, apart from the introduction of traditional Japanese theatre, the successful performance of Shakespeare's plays by Japanese companies had not been staged abroad for a long time until Ninagawa company in the 1980's.

The Significance of the Foreign Adaptation of Shakespeare

There is another aspect of the foreign adaptations of Shakespeare's plays that we must discuss before we compare them with British productions, which use the original texts without any alterations. First of all, the problem of language, and second, the different cultural background.

Shakespearean productions performed in foreign languages are sometimes difficult to be considered as 'Shakespeare'. It is simply because they do not use his own language and do not make use of his cultural climate, which are thought to be 'inseparable' from his

works. Dennis Kennedy discusses, in *Foreign Shakespeare*, those productions' linguistic problems as follows:

> English-speakers are apt to assume that foreign language productions necessarily lose an essential element of Shakespeare in the process of linguistic and cultural transfer, and of course this is true. But it is also true, as I am suggesting, that some foreign performances may have a more direct access to the power of the plays. In this respect the modernity of translation is crucial. Shakespeare's poetry maybe one of the glories of human life, but the archaism and remoteness of his language create enormous difficulties for audiences in the late twentieth century. The fact is, harsh as it may sound to some teachers of English, we do not speak the same language as Shakespeare: at best we speak a remote dialect of it. A foreign language, while missing the full value of the verse, can be said to have an advantage of great significance in the theatre.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In general, foreign productions of Shakespeare, freed from the burden imposed by centuries of admiring his language, have been more ready to admit that the door to the past is locked.[3]

Progressive as it may sound, it is true that the viewer of Kurosawa's Shakespeare or the audience of Ninagawa's *Macbeth* feels more at ease than the English audience of his plays who are not familiar with 'his' language. The Japanese audience freely enjoys the story and the meaning of words without any linguistic difficulties or psychological pressure.

Therefore, as Dennis Kennedy argues, it is strange but true that "some foreign performances may have a more direct access to the power of the plays". And in this respect, we must think about Shakespeare's productions without his own language as the ones that could be closer to Shakespeare than those which use his own words.

Secondly, we must think about the problem of the adaptation to different cultures. Dennis Kennedy questions:

> To what extent are western Shakespeareans prepared to acknowledge and understand that extreme kind of transculturalism, specially when it violates accepted standards of interpretation?[4]

Shakespeare without his cultural background is another problem when we think about culturally translated productions by foreign companies. Western people tend to seek something new in those exotic productions to renew their own productions of Shakespeare, but Kennedy denies their readiness to accept foreign Shakespearean productions on the same level as those produced in the west.

However, the number of foreign productions of Shakespeare is increasing year by year, not only those performed in their own countries, but in Britain, and, needless to say Shakespeare's plays are translated into many languages and read by children all over the world almost like bedtime stories. In foreign countries, in that kind of situation, people have different kinds of interpretation based on their own background. It is natural that they should create different types of productions, culturally translated.

Western people (here I mean mainly English and Americans who use Shakespeare's language) cannot ignore the success of those foreign productions, by discussing them as merely visually stimulating and culturally exotic. Now they must think more clearly about their success.

* * * * *

In this thesis, I would like to discuss the attraction of the two Japanese cultural translations of Kurosawa and Ninagawa. While explaining their cultural background and its meaning, I will clarify the reasons why they are accepted by western audiences with great applause, and compare them with other famous western productions in the last chapter.

Chapter I

Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*

Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* has been analyzed by many critics, especially by western viewers, but I must say there is some misinterpretation of the film in their comments, mainly because of their ignorance of its cultural background. I would like to describe the film, focusing on its cultural point of view and clarify the meaning of the Japanese cultural translation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

When the title appears on the screen, we hear the shrill sound of a flute, which is one of the traditional instruments used in *gagaku*[1] and the Noh theatre, accompanied with insistent beats of a bass drum. The music is cold, dark, and unearthly. It makes us expect the appearance of a ghost, which is conventionally represented by this kind of high tone of a flute in old Japanese plays.[2] Soon after it stops, the sound effect of the wind begins, and we see a cold desolate place covered with a thick mist. The screen is monochrome, so that we cannot see anything but white airy mist and a solid black field of barrenness. The simplicity of the picture is striking, and it leads us forcefully into the centre of the story by attracting our attention. Suddenly, a song breaks a short pause for this description of the place:

> A proud castle stood
> In this place
> Its destiny wedded to
> A mortal's lusts for power
> Here lived a warrior
> strong yet weakened by a woman
> Driven to add his tribute

To the throne of blood
The devil's path
Will always lead to doom.[3]

This song is also sung at the end of the film. It represents the moral themes of Kurosawa's *Macbeth*: the mortality of men, the vanity of proud ambition, and also, the repetitions of evil human acts. The essence of the idea can be found in *Heike-monogatari*, which is a classic of Japanese literature written about the Heike family during the 11th century. It was sometimes sung and narrated by a blind minstrel, and the words of the opening are quite well-known to the Japanese people even now:

The sound of bells
Tells everything is transient
In this world;
The colour of flowers
Shows every man who prospers
Will fall in the end:
Proud men shall never last,
Just like the dust before wind.[4]

Whether consciously or not, Kurosawa uses a similar kind of narrative style at the start of his film and the same idea about mankind that is basically derived from Buddhism.

During the song, the camera shows us in much more detail the place where the story will be told. As the camera moves slowly from right to left, the withered grass on the ground, the bald slope of the mountain and the ruin of a castle wall gradually come into view through the mist. There appears an old wooden monument, weather-beaten and rotten, standing uselessly, forgotten by everybody. It reads "*Kumonosu-jo Ato*" (" The Site of Cobweb Castle"). The name of the castle is the title of the Japanese version of the film, and those black letters hand-written with a brush are blurred on the decayed wood, so that they obviously symbolize the passing of time. Now we know that it is a story set up in some past period, and the devastated image of these pictures tell us the old story, "Once

there lived a warrior, but now he is gone, and nothing is left behind him except one meaningless piece of wood standing in the place where he used to live . . . ".

Little by little, the camera withdraws from the monument, which seems to retreat from us, vanishing into the thick mist again. For this time, the mist surges instantly to cover up the earth, and the screen soon becomes nothing but white. Without any music, we only hear the sound of a cold wind as at the beginning. Nothing can be seen for a moment because of the mist, but the memory of the monument is still clear in our mind, and we imagine that it is hiding behind the white wall of the mist. Nevertheless, as the mist clears away, there appears a large castle which seems to be a Japanese building of the 16th century,[5] the age of civil strife. The music is used as a curtain would be on stage: we are transported into the past without changing location. This is one of the techniques that Kurosawa uses in the film, and it heightens the narrative effects of the drama.

In front of the building, a gigantic gate can be seen. It is massive to keep the castle safe from intruders. Its cold expressionless face seems to stand for the rejection of outsiders, and this sense of coldness is constantly felt throughout the film. Towards the gate, moving across the screen from the lower right corner, a soldier appears with two flags flying in the wind at his back. He gallops towards the gate, and knocks with all his might. He is gasping, and soon falls to the ground, but still keeps on knocking. In the next scene, he is in front of a row of many armoured warriors dressed in a style of the *Sengoku* period in the 16th century. Now we know he is a messenger who has come with news of the progress of the war begun by the treason of Fujimaki and Inui. He gasps out his words to his lord who wears a helmet with an ornament of the moon, a symbol which will be seen later on his coffin.

After the first messenger says that their four forts have been defeated, a second messenger enters from the gate, which we see open from the inside this time, and he speaks of the valour of Washizu and Miki. The men, who are discouraged at the news that is brought by the first messenger, suddenly cheer up. A third messenger says that Washizu has completely defeated Inui's soldiers, and a forth says that Fujimaki showed great repentance for his treason. In this succession of messengers, Kurosawa uses a cinematic technique of "wipe", which seems to erase a scene from the screen followed by another. Charles Bazerman argues that the device heightens the effect of time in this scene:

> . . . . . The messengers do not even have to enter and exit; they can be simply discovered in the center of the screen and wiped off by the image of the next messenger. The device of repeated messengers becomes more efficient, precise and effective on screen. The resources of film to control time enhance a stage technique relying on time control. In making the script changes Kurosawa was exploiting the potential of film to control time; as a result, the film makes the pace of events an important element in the experience of the scene. The measured duration of shots and cutting techniques have led to a script change which has led to a new affective element in the scene, a sense of urgency of time.[6]

In Act I scene ii of *Macbeth*, there is no succession of messengers as in this scene, but the device can be seen in other plays, such as *Richard III* (Act IV scene iv). Even on stage, to enhance "a sense of urgency of time", the entrances and exits of messengers should be rapid. After a long interval of silence, in Kurosawa's version, the urgency is all the more effective and significant. The bad news of the first messenger depresses the hearers, who fall into a long pensive silence. They are cheered up suddenly by the successive messengers who come to tell the opposite news. The effect of the "wipe" suggests the urgency of time and, simultaneously, it creates the reality of their rapid psychological change as well.

The end of this scene is almost the same as Shakespeare's, which is concluded by Duncan:

> No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive

> Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
> And with his former title greet Macbeth.
> . . . . . .
> What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won. (I. ii. 64-68)[7]

Tsuzuki (Duncan in *Macbeth*) says, "Go to the North Castle with your men and behead Fujimaki . . . I myself shall reward them for their service". (Macbeth is Washizu and Banquo is Miki, and he means both of them here.)

The opening scene of *Throne of Blood* uses some narrative conventions of theatre and literature in Japan. The way of narrating the story is visual and aural rather than by the spoken word, and it concentrates our attention effectively within a very short time. In the first scene of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the appearance of the Witches in thunder is quite dramatically ordered, but it seems that Kurosawa's "narrative" opening makes the first appearance of the unearthly thing more thrillingly shocking to us. "Narrative" means not only a fictional story, but it might be said that it presents something "real" which could possibly happen just in our own time. Certainly, Kurosawa created such reality at the beginning of his film.

With "thunder and lightning", the scene changes into the forest. In the centre of the screen, through the path among the tangled boughs and bushes, two armoured soldiers on horseback can be seen dashing toward us. They seem to whip their horses desperately. Though it is raining very hard, there is sunlight from above the trees. The light is weirdly mixed with the mist, and the beams filtering through the branches seem mysterious. Looking up at the sky, Washizu says, "What a day today! I have never seen such strange weather". Obviously, it comes from Macbeth's first speech in Act I scene iii, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen". (l. 38) This is often thought to be an echo of the Weird Sisters' incantation in Act I scene i; "Fair is foul and foul is fair". (l. 11) In *Macbeth*, the hero's

first words imply his fate and fall even before he himself hears the Witches' prophecy. He seems to have already been inspired by the wicked spirits, or it might be possible to think that the Witches have known his words before they inspire him. It is, therefore, a very significant and dramatic moment in Shakespeare's original. On the other hand, in *Throne of Blood*, without the Witches' appearance before the scene, the real "foul and fair" weather replaces the original speech of Macbeth. It is no longer necessary to imagine the weather by Macbeth's words but we should think about the reason why it is so "foul and fair" as we now see on screen. It is a foreboding of what happens next and of the natural disorder, as we are to know soon, caused by the spirit. Such is the difference between theatre and cinema, and Kurosawa makes the most of visual reality for his adaptation to compensate for the poetical imagination of the original.[8]

As soon as Washizu has spoken his words, thunder and lightning come again. Miki says, "Let's hurry up", and they whip their horses, galloping through the forest, only to find themselves lost. There are their own hoofprints on the ground they already passed over, and they know that they have come back again to the same place. Again, there is the sound of thunder and a flash of lightning. Their figures with armour and helmets, which are described in the script ("A horrifyingly fresh smell of war arises from the two armoured figures, who are smeared with blood, mud and rain") are now warlike and are lit up in the centre of the screen.

> Washizu: But . . . we have already been galloping in the forest for some time, yet there is no sign of an exit.
> Miki: (laughs.) Surely worthy of the name---*Kumote*, Cobweb Forest. Like the threads of a spider, roads run in various directions and misguide the enemy. This is really a strategic position for our *Kumonosu* Castle.[9]

Miki explains the origin of the name of the castle, which is the title of the film. It is interesting that they get lost in the forest, a scene not found in the original. J. Blumenthal argues in his authoritative essay on *Throne of Blood* that "The forest, which is the objectification of Washizu's mind, both controls and contains the action of the film".[10] By getting lost in the forest, Washizu and also Miki are led into "the devil's path" of delusion. Miki becomes as ambitious as Washizu in *Throne of Blood* after he hears the beginning of his long struggle, ending in ruin, and if the forest is "the objectification" of his mind, it is obvious that he has already begun to lose control of it.

The image of the spirit scene is derived from one of the Noh plays, *Kurozuka*. In the play, one old lady, who is a sort of ogress, turns a spinning wheel as the spirit does in the film. A group of tourists find her hut in *Adachi-gahara* in the evening and ask her to let them stay one night. After she goes out to get them firewood, forbidding them to look in her bedroom, one of the men is curious and takes a peep into it. There he sees a heap of human bodies, as in the film, Washizu and Miki see the same things after the spirit vanishes into the air.

Again with thunder in the background, we see Washizu shoot an arrow at the sky among the branches, and simultaneously we hear sarcastic laughter resounding all over the forest. Washizu says: "You heard it. An evil spirit, it's the work of an evil spirit." Miki answers him bravely without showing any fear: "Well, on the honour of my spear, I'll get out of this forest."

No sooner does Washizu answer, "Witness, God of War, by my arrow and bow", than they start to gallop their horses through the path of the forest. The speedy switch of their movements makes this series of scenes quite striking and heightens the emotion of the viewers. The music is also effectively used to dramatize the moment and enhance the sense

of speed of their galloping. When they eventually stop after a long gallop into the depths of the forest, where they find the real figure of the spirit, there can be found a lot of contrastive elements, such as motion and stillness, and sound and silence.

Arriving at the far end of the forest, they see a broken hut appearing in a mysterious sight of light and fog. Their horses are terrified at something. Washizu and Miki cannot make them walk any farther. The two soldiers stop there. Silence falls. As if by a fade-in, slowly and quietly, we begin to hear a song in an uncannily low voice. As it comes from Hell, it is dark and also sad. The tone sounds, to Japanese ears, something like the chant of a sutra (a Buddhist prayer by reciting written books). It says:

> Ah, miserable, miserable!
> Born in this human world,
> Living a transient life like an insect's,
> How silly to worry ourselves!
> Ah, miserable, miserable!
> The life of flowers is too transient,
> Only to turn into decomposed matter.

The camera moves gradually through the trees towards the hut, representing the curiosity and intensity of the two soldiers' eyes. An old woman sits there wearing a completely white costume, turning a spinning wheel. From top to toe, she looks white because of her hair and makeup. The colour reminds us of a ghost (Japanese ghosts are always thought to wear white because of their shrouds or to represent the ashes of human bones). She turns a wheel with white skeletal hands and sings as she works. On the slowness of this scene, John Gerlach comments that it is "less effective".

> The slowness is of course requisite for the sense of the supernatural; we hardly expect fate to work at human speed, as if it were turning out cloth for human consumption. In this case, the viewer is granted no superiority, which would simplify the scene and prevent the viewer from identifying or participating with the action. Even though the point of view opens up more complex reactions in the viewer, comparison to sequences which follow it, as Washizu and Miki wander among the heaped bodies of the dead that surround the hut, shows the weakness of the spinning scene.[11]

Thus the slowness and simplicity of the scene seems to have made a different kind of impression on the western viewer. Gerlach argues that the simplicity of the scene would not engage the emotions of the viewer, and that the impact of the dead bodies in the next scene is much stronger than that. In this scene, however, the song of the spirit repeats the main theme that is already presented by the chant of the opening scene, thus making the thematic structure of the film more organized and coherent. The scene itself, therefore, has a very important meaning in that sense, and also, the slowness of the scene can arouse another kind of emotion for Japanese viewers: we simply feel fear. Remote in the depths of a thick forest, a woman sits alone in an old hut and does some strange work very slowly, crooning a sad song. That is the frequent image of an ogress in Japanese folk tales,[12] and the slowness of her motion makes us curiously expect some sudden event---the next horrible incident. It is like a ghost story in which children are absorbed half with fear and half with an expectation of great surprise in the climax of the story.

The sense of horror might be based on the Japanese cultural tradition in itself. The evil spirit is called "*mono-no-ke*" in the film, which is a revengeful spirit[13] thought to come out of either a living or a dead person and curse people against whom he seeks vengeance. It is essentially different from the Weird Sisters in the play. If there appeared three spirits in the film, they would not relate to the Japanese background, and as a result of this, we could never feel the sense of horror. Gerlach says, "The bones" in the scene after the spinning "are at once realistic and symbolic; the spirit is pure symbol".[14] Here is an example of a difference of perception that can be hardly explained to the western viewer.

Originally in Shakespeare's Act I scene iii, Macbeth and Banquo find the women who have beards and "look not like th'inhabitants o'th'earth" (l. 41) on the heath:

> MACBETH: (to the Witches) Speak if you can: what are you?
> FIRST WITCH: All hail Macbeth, hail to thee Thane of Glamis.

> SECOND WITCH: All hail Macbeth, hail to thee Thane of Cawdor.
> THIRD WITCH: All hail Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter. (I. iii. 41)

In Kurosawa's version, though the language itself is Japanese, and is slightly old-fashioned, this scene is fairly close to the original text of the play compared with the other scenes.

> Miki: What are you? A man or a devil in the flesh?
> Washizu: Hey, you! No words? You surely can speak, since you can sing.
> Old Woman: Yes, Taketoki Washizu, head of the First Fort.
> Washizu: What? I, lord of the North Castle from this evening?
> Old Woman: Yes, my lord. And, lord of Kumonosu Castle hereafter.
> (p. 234)

As Miki says to her, "What are you", Washizu opens the flimsy door like a fence, which divides off her hut from the place where they stand, very roughly. The roughness contrasts clearly with the slowness and gentleness of the Old Woman's behaviour in answering them, "Yes". Though the brave soldiers step forward to encounter her, her "Yes" seems to evade their rash assault very easily with one word.

Her words provoke Washizu to anger, "Stop this babbling!". Her face is uncannily wrinkled when she smiles and says, "How foolish a man is! Why, to be afraid to plumb his own heart!" Her gentle and high voice is changed into a low and sarcastic tone here. When he hears this, suddenly, he draws his bow. The interesting thing is that the emotion he shows here is not surprise or rapture such as Banquo points out in the play, but anger against the spirit. By adding the lines "plumb his own heart", in order to provoke him, she shows clearly that he is trying to hide the shame of revealed ambition in him.

Miki stops Washizu and then is told the prophecy about himself:

> Old Woman: Your fortune is lesser and greater than General Washizu's.
> Miki: What? What do you mean?
> Old Woman: Your son is to be lord of *Kumonosu* Castle hereafter. (p. 234)

After finishing her words, she ascends in smoke "Into the air", her costume and long gray hair streaming in the wind. The two men are left there, standing vacantly, and find the heaps of dead bodies in the place where she was.

A mist covers the screen again as in the opening of the film. It is symptomatic of the confused minds of Washizu and Miki after they hear the prophecies and see the atrocious heaps of skeletons covered with weeds called *shibito-so* ("dead men's weeds").[15] Immediately after this sequence of images of death, their figures are dimly seen to come out of the mist on galloping horses. Then, repeatedly, again and again, they gallop back and forth, rushing in and out of the white screen, with only the sound of neighing horses and the clatter of hoofs and armour.

Occasionally, we might experience that our subjective sense of time is disturbed after a severe shock. The long continuing shots of their galloping show exactly that kind of distracted human mind which has lost the normal sense of time. This is one of the techniques[16] that Bazerman refers to as "cinematic control of time"[17] which "makes the visual metaphor of disorientation evocative"[18] in this scene. Not one word is uttered during the sequence, the viewer realizes that whilst wandering in the mist, they are preoccupied with the same thought that Macbeth reveals to the audience:

> This supernatural soliciting
> Cannot be ill, cannot be good . . .
> . . . . . .
> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature? Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings:
> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man, that function
> Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
> But what is not. (I. iii. 131-43)

His psychological reaction shows that he feels "fears" inside that he might commit a murder in the future, and the thought of the deed deprives him of the sense of reality.[19] In the same way, the "disorientation" of Washizu and Miki in the mist presents their mental disorder caused by the spirit or their own evil thoughts.

When the mist finally clears away, (in a way that, as Tadao Sato describes, "the protagonist who has been wandering around in the darkness of his mind suddenly find himself in the place where he is,"[20]) Cobweb Castle appears again with its threatening features before them. They feel terribly exhausted. They feel as if they were in a dream. Miki says, "We say dreams are the expression of our five desires".[21] In his words, their ambition for promotion is uncovered, but they still look cheerful enough to laugh at the prophecies that they have just heard in the forest. As their actual promotions are announced by Lord Tsuzuki in front of all his attendants, they go stiff with surprise just as Macbeth does after he receives the news from Ross and Angus in Act I scene iii.

The next scene is bright in contrast: this brightness can be thought to correspond to the peaceful atmosphere of Act I scene vi: Rice fields, people planting; the merry and pastoral mood is with them. And it is also contrasted with the darkness inside the room where Washizu and Asaji are plotting. The camera catches their almost motionless figures: thus, after the lively movement of the people, the contrast with the outside world is even more clear. This effective use of natural light, however, is indebted to the tradition of Japanese architecture.

Junichiro Tanizaki's essay "In Praise of Shadows" (1933) represents very strikingly the beauty of the variation of light and shadow in a traditional Japanese room.[22] Its aesthetic sense of lighting is also used in the half-dark room of Washizu and Asaji.

The simple structure of their room also reminds us of the bare Noh stage. Obviously, it is "symbolically modelled after the shape of"[23] it. When we think of the meaning of the Noh stage, there is a certain symbolic image behind the room. Noh has two characteristics in itself: One is the sanctity of the space on the stage, derived from the ritualistic nature of *Dengaku* (ritual music and dancing performed in Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, developed from the ancient rice field festivals). The other is the element of the magical rite originated with *Sarugaku* (the prototype of the Noh farce based mime).[24]

These two features of Noh, the sanctity of the stage space and the magic element of the rite, indicate the importance of the place where the magic rite is carried out. Some sort of mystical atmosphere is necessary for the incantation of the descent of gods. Therefore, the place itself is sacred, and magic.

It is very interesting to see Asaji speak of her dark ambition to Washizu in the room modelled on the Noh stage, if the idea is taken into consideration. She looks like a *miko* (a shrine medium) who in Noh plays casts a spell, and her face is made to resemble a Noh mask called *shakumi*. It is the face of a woman who is not very young or beautiful, and the character who puts on the mask is supposed to go mad later in the play.[25] Her image of magic parallels that of Lady Macbeth, whose incantation, before her husband's return in Act I scene v, shows her power to evoke evil.

When Asaji says, with the mask-like expressionless face, in a low voice, "Did you make up your mind? (p. 237)", Washizu gets confused and restless. He denies his ambition and insists that he should "live peacefully, content with (p. 237)" his lot. His wife says calmly that he could never be safe, if Miki reveals the prophecy to their Lord Tsuzuki, and if it causes him to believe that he will be a usurper. Now his fear is compounded. "We

must kill others to avoid being killed," Asaji sounds devil-like, justifying his action in a perverse way. At the height of his tension, a messenger comes in and gives the information about Tsuzuki's arrival with his men-at-arms.

The next shot also corresponds to the peacefulness of Duncan's arrival scene in the play. The people on horses, carrying game, come through a footpath between rice fields in a pastoral mood. The women farmers, wearing straw hats and ragged clothes, bow down along the path. The weather is fine. The music sounds merry. It is a very simple sketch of Japanese rural life,[26] an image which often appears in folk tales.

It is reported that Tsuzuki's visit, under the guise of hunting, is for attacking Inui. He commands Miki to take charge of *Kumonosu-jo* during his expedition, and orders Washizu to lead the vanguard of the attack. All his men sitting on the floor bow down to his command, showing their strict obedience to him. Among them, to the viewer, Asaji does not look prostrate. She can be seen to have her head half-raised, still expressionless with glaring eyes, which fixed to one point, look at him.

That night, in front of the bedroom where Tsuzuki sleeps, three armoured guards are lit by the bonfires in the garden. Two followers of the North Castle come in with torches. They say that they will make a bed for their lord Washizu and Lady Asaji in the room called "the forbidden room" (*akazuno-ma*), where Fujimaki the former lord of the castle killed himself to atone for his rebellion. It has been kept closed since then, because the stain of his blood cannot be removed from the wall. The watchers allow them to pass through to the room. The next moment, the torch, held by one of the followers, points to light a corner of the inside. Out of the darkness, the eerie large figure of the blood stain on the wooden wall comes into sight.

The English title of the film is thought to be taken from this image. The place where the blood stain spreads is an original Japanese alcove which used to be an equivalent to a throne. (Even now, in a traditional room, the person who sits with his back to an alcove is the most important.) It is very symbolic that the bloody throne is shown before Washizu murders his lord. The man who died on the throne was a traitor, whose plot was in vain. Only his blood tells how the act was meaningless as was his life, too. Washizu is now about to do the same thing, which will result in nothing but death.

As well as being symbolic, the sight is horrifying enough for the viewer to feel something irresistible. Thomas De Quincey analyzes the reaction of the audience to the murder of Duncan. He says that their sympathy is, in ordinary cases, to the murdered person. It is simply because we have "the natural but ignoble instinct by which we cleave to life".[27] We cannot resist feeling some kind of instinctive fear against the image of death. In that sense, the bloody throne effectively evokes horror, giving the viewer the impression that Washizu's act is inhuman.

Washizu, being told that he will be the leader of the vanguard, has no suspicion about Tsuzuki any longer. He thinks that he has won Tsuzuki's trust but his wife still remains suspicious about Tsuzuki's intention of killing him. Asaji implies that he would be the target of Tsuzuki and Miki. He is exposed to the danger of the battle while Miki safely stays in his charge of Cobweb Castle. Asaji incites him just as Lady Macbeth does (O never/ Shall sun that morrow see---l. 59-60), telling him;

> . . . . . .Observe that arrangements for the fulfilment of the prophecy have already been made.
> (Washizu *is confused.*)
> Is this not enough to convince you? . . . Our lord flew into your reach by himself.
> (Washizu *is appalled.*)
> If you fail tonight, you will never have such a good opportunity again.
> (p. 242)

They both emphasize that there is no other chance but "tonight".

The following shots (up to the murder of Tsuzuki) derive from the brilliant effects of the Noh drama. Firstly, the use of the Noh instruments. When the ominous sound of cuckoos is heard, Asaji says that it is heaven's voice. The next moment, to the high tone of a flute and the light beat of a tabor, she holds Washizu's hand and takes him to the corner of the room in the quick tempo of the Noh-like movement. And also in the next scene, left alone in the room, while Washizu murders Tsuzuki, Asaji steps towards the stained throne, which looks like a pine tree pictured on the Noh stage,[28] dancing to the same sound of the instruments. Both of the scenes depict the excitement of the characters, and their emotions are much stylized. The music is called *hayashi* (instrumental music), which is divided into several categories in Noh plays,[29] and one of them is *hataraki-goto* (descriptive pieces) played to evoke "a mood of danger, insanity, excitement, or battle".[30]

Secondly, the introduction of the movement patterns of Noh. Asaji disappears into the darkness of the inner room to fetch the bottle of poisoned *sake*. The image of the scene is very striking because of her restricted movement. Noh actors are always required to move horizontally with a gliding walk, (which is also seen in the tea ceremony), centred in the hips, maintaining the level without bobbing up and down, even when moving rapidly.[30] Asaji moves into the room with a gliding walk, with her upper body completely fixed. Smoothly and quietly, appearing again out of the darkness, she looks almost like a spirit.

Thirdly, the existence of *ma*: the essential concept of the art of Noh, which means "space, spacing, interval, gap, blank, room, pause, rest, time, timing or opening."[32] As Zeami says, "What actors do not do is of interest",[33] Noh acting is doing something to create the *ma* that is blank in space and time in which nothing is done.[34] When Asaji pulls Washizu's hand toward the throne to the music, saying, "To me the note of a cuckoo is a

voice from above (p. 242)," the two persons stare at each other in silence. There is *ma*. Through the *shoji* (the paper sliding screens in a Japanese room), two spots of candlelight, carried by the followers to let them know their beds are made, are seen to move toward the front of the room where they sit. Asaji turns back and they stop. There is *ma*. Just before the murder, Asaji enters into the never-opened room with a spear. Silently approaching Washizu, she hands it to him. He receives it and motionless moments create *ma*, where "nothing is done". But this does not mean everything is undone. It is just the opposite: these moments are filled with the emotional tension of their acting.

These elements of Noh signify something in the scenes. Tadao Sato refers to the murder scene as "a splendid dumb show"[35] and describes that they look as if they were handled by obsessions or the supernatural power, not by their own will".[36] It is because, he argues, the style of Noh acting determines the actions of the characters before they act voluntarily, and as a result, "the most important thing here, is not their psychology, but the pattern of their action".[37]

The elements of Noh: the symbolized sound, the stylized movement, and the timing of acting; give the same effects to these scenes as in Noh plays, which do not describe the psychology of individual characters, but symbolize each one aspect of their lives.[38] Consequently, Washizu and Asaji are no longer their individual selves in here, but simply representative types of men and women.

With a bloody spear, Washizu enters the room. He looks aghast. Trying to support his body with the spear, he sinks down on the floor. His wife wrests it from his hands. Through the corridor, with the rustle of her *kimono*, she runs to place it in the hands of one of the sleeping guards. When she returns, Washizu still gasps with vacant eyes. His perturbation is exactly the same as that of Macbeth in the play, who looks insane just after

the murder, crying, "Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep . . . " (II. ii. 35) Asaji washes her blood-stained hands in a lacquered basin besides her dazed husband, and runs out of the room, again through the corridor, down to the garden where a pine tree stretches its branches, toward the locked gate. She opens it and cries, "Traitors! Traitors!" (p. 244)

On hearing the voice, Washizu recovers his senses. He dashes out of the room and shouts as Asaji does. The three guards wake up, shocked and bewildered. With his sword Washizu slashes to death the one whom Asaji had made hold the bloody spear.

Through the first murder, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have in fact stepped into another world where the inverted ethics of the Witches are its only principles. As Macbeth says later in Act III scene iv:

> . . . . . I am in blood
> Stepped in so far, that should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er. (ll. 137-39)

He realizes that he could no longer return to the real world where he used to be, and the only way to 'exist' is to carry on their deeds.

Stephen Spender says, "They 'are as haunted as James Joyce and Proust by the sense of time'", and he discusses the high frequency of their use of the words related with time in the play.[39] Their obsession with time affects the audience as well. Especially after the murder, it is obvious that two different types of time begin to exist in the world on stage: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's imaginary time and the real time of the other people around them. Not only morally, but also socially does their murder begin to have a meaning, so that the audience is also given the chance to see them from the objective time of outside.

In this respect, there must be a great turning point between before and after the murder, and to the audience, it seems that, as it were, a sense of restlessness begins, which

urges the audience to follow the two dimensions of time. It is something like the feeling of a rush of passion when music changes from a solo to full orchestra.

Kurosawa's film successfully catches the dramatic moment of the change, leading the viewer into emotional 'restlessness' effectively. After Asaji's scream of "Traitors!" and Washizu's slaughter of the guard, the shot of a battlefield suddenly comes into view. It is chaotic. Horses are running around without riders. People are shouting. There is the confused motion of flags, spears and arrows. It elicits a simple question from the viewer; what is happening? Soon we get the answer. Kunimaru, Tsuzuki's son rides on horseback, crying, "Let me go!". Noriyasu, who is the Macduff character, tries to calm him down, saying, "If we die to no purpose, the rights and wrongs of the matter can never be judged!" (p. 245) They are fighting against the army of Washizu, who blames them for the murder.

The sudden change from the private matter of the deed into the chaos of the society vividly describes how influential Washizu's act has been. Suddenly, the viewer is to see some other consequences of his crime.

Through the forest path, raising a cloud of dust, a number of soldiers on horses are galloping off in line, chasing after the enemy. Washizu and his men are the pursuers. Kunimaru and Noriyasu try to escape from them. The camera catches the energetic movements of pursuers and pursued alternately, making a strong impact on the viewer. Arriving at Cobweb Castle, where Miki should be in charge, the fleers stop their horses in front of the black gate and shout:

> If you please, I must speak to General Miki! Our senior lord, on his way to the punitive encounter against Inui, died an ignominious death, due to the treason of Taketoki Washizu . . . I, Noriyasu Odagura, accompanying our young lord, Kunimaru, cut our way through the enemy and managed to return to the castle . . . I say, open the door immediately! (p. 246)

There is no answer to this. The gate still remains closed. Noriyasu shouts again. No answer. Weird silence. An arrow, from high above, flies to the ground where they are standing. A shower of arrows follow.

Washizu and his soldiers watch them being shot at from a distance, without knowing Miki's intention, either. Like the escape of Macduff and Malcolm to England, now Noriyasu and Kunimaru can only flee from Miki as well as Washizu.

John Gerlach comments on the funeral procession in the next scene and argues that it is successful in its "tension of duration" in comparison with the "less effective" slow motion of the spirit scene.[40] As Miki refuses to open the gate, Washizu and his men decide to make a funeral procession with the coffin of Lord Tsuzuki, acting on Lady Asaji's advice. They proceed slowly toward the gate. The horses quietly move along on the sandy ground, while the men who bear the coffin walk forward with grave steps. On the top of it, the helmet of the dead, with the moon decoration, can be seen. They are all under the strain of the fear that they may be shot by arrows. The gigantic black figure of the castle emerges in front of them, eventually showing in its wall the numerous square slits for attack..

After this long shot, the gate slowly opens with some creaky noises. From the inside, Miki on a horse appears, glaring fiercely at Washizu. "The evil spirit of *Kumote* Forest made a good guess, didn't she!", (p. 249) he says, when Washizu frighteningly gazes at the women weeping for the death of their lady. She has committed suicide, to prevent herself seeing her enemy taking over the castle.

Miki's ambition is shown here more obviously than Banquo's in the play. Miki tells Washizu, "feigning ignorance, with his face to the front", (p. 249) that he will recommend Washizu as the lord of the castle at the Conference. Washizu later tells his wife that this is by Miki's "constant friendship", (p. 250) which shows the sheer simplicity of Washizu's

character, but it is in fact Miki's design to make the prophecies come true. He takes an action, while Banquo merely speaks of his hope:

> Why by the verities on thee made good
> May they not be my oracles as well,
> And set me up in hope? . . . (III. i. 8-10)

The enlargement of the Banquo character affects the whole image of the film. The intensification of the evil side of the character gives the impression that the film is no longer the description of Washizu's individual character but it is more likely to be the 'standardization' of the evil root of human mind. In the film, the dark ambition of the two men does not bring the multiplication of evil to its *Macbeth* world, but rather dilutes the hero's sole self agonizing as a 'sinner'.

In the large, well-furnished room of the castle, Asaji and Washizu sit alone. They have moved from the North Castle. The luxurious design of the clothes and the furniture, which is in contrast with their gloomy mood, tells of the great change in their social status. The wall behind them is the traditional pattern of clouds drawn on a golden foil. It is not only coincidental that the Japanese sound of the original title "spider" (*kumo*) is the same as that of "cloud" (*kumo*).[41] There is some paronomastic association between the two.

"I'm pregnant", Asaji says calmly with her face expressionless. "What? You, expecting a child?", (p. 251) Washizu asks fiercely in panic. The banquet on that night is planned for the announcement of Miki's son as his successor. Now they must hurry to send an assassin. A white horse called "Asakaze" (which means a morning wind) is raging in the garden of Miki's castle. His retainers run after him, one of them saying that he "is ordinarily very tame' (p. 251) but beyond their control that day. This image originates from the conversation between Ross and an Old Man in Act II scene iv, but the most striking idea that Kurosawa created for the scene is the horse coming back without its rider.

There is no mention that Miki is murdered on the way to the party hosted by Washizu, but when Miki's men are talking about the unnatural behaviour of the horse at night, Asakaze runs back in the darkness, neighing mournfully, alone. Bernice Kliman refers to it as "compactness",[42] visually equivalent to the essential element of the "terseness"[43] of poetry. It is the simplest way of describing events in films, and is often used particularly in this film.

In the grand hall of the castle, one old general is dancing. It is a banquet. Washizu and Asaji sit in the centre of the front, separating symmetrically the two rows of their guests in both sides.[44] The chorus sings with the dance:

> Mark our words, a spirit of the dead.
> In olden times there was also such an instance.
> The devil who served a traitor called Chikata was there.
> He had scarcely deserted Chikata before he met with his own destruction.
> It was Heaven's justice on him for having revolted against kingship.
> (p.253)

This irritates Washizu, making him fiercely shout, "Stop it!". The general in a flurry prostrates, going back in his lower seat. Silence. Two seats of honour are vacant, where black lacquered tables with meals are already set for Miki and his son. Washizu repeatedly glances at the seats, nervously drinking from his *sake* cup.

Suddenly, the camera catches the change of his expression. His face goes stiff and pale with his eyes widely opened. A white figure with his topknot (*chon-mage*) untied is feebly sitting in one of the vacant seats. It seems to grin. Washizu throws away his cup, holding his spear, shouting at it, trembling with fear, "You devil, Yoshiaki!". (p. 253)

Interestingly, the ghost is typical of a certain type of Japanese ghosts. The face is, according to Kurosawa's own explanation,[45] modelled after the Noh mask of *Chujo*, which symbolizes a young man, but what impresses the Japanese viewer is the complete visualization of the Japanese general image of ghosts, looking very thin, weak, and all

white, with long black hair hanging wetly from both sides instead of in a topknot. More or less, this vision of the ghost has a particular resonance for the Japanese viewer which the non-Japanese viewer cannot share.

In Japanese folklore, ghosts are mainly divided into two kinds of spirits: one is a living ghost which includes *mono-no-ke* (The witch in the film is this type); and the other is a dead ghost (Miki's ghost is this type). They are generally called *Onryo* and thought to be "the spirits which are living inside human beings separated from bodies"[46] after death, because of their unrevenged grudge.

Three times Washizu sees the ghost. The last time cannot be seen to the viewer. He is only seen to move around the hall furiously, frightening his guests. Asaji, like Lady Macbeth, finally implores the guests to leave the banquet after she has failed to make her husband come to himself:

> Please don't be offended. The frenzy of our lord will be gone when he becomes sober. I am sorry that your pleasure was spoiled by an unfortunate disturbance. Tonight I wish you to leave the castle. (p. 254)

Asaji seems to be more placid than Lady Macbeth in this scene. Lady Macbeth says to the guests more in panic:

> . . . . . ---at once, good night.
> Stand not upon the order of your going,
> But go at once. (III. iv. 119-21)

Then after the scene, she leaves the stage until the next time she appears in her sleep-walking scene.

Asaji still keeps calm when she sees her husband's blunder but when she hears the news about Yoshiteru's flight from an armoured murderer, (who appears with Miki's head after the guests are gone), she silently leaves the room, vanishing again into the darkness inside the door.

Washizu, being left alone with the man, stands just in front of a wall on which the picture of the abstract shape of clouds is drawn. He is costumed like a *gogatsu-ningyo* (a doll for the Boy's Festival in May), glaring at the prostrating soldier. He draws his sword and slashes him in an instant. He looks strangely curious to see the man writhing in pain to death, like a child who secretly enjoys killing insects.

Jack J. Jorgens, in his *Shakespeare on Film*,[47] touches on the image of insects and animals in the film. He says that the forest spirit's laughter echoes through the film, "resembling a child's amoral delight as it watches a fly struggle in a web."[48] In addition, he points out that "the characters' costumes, movements, and postures make them resemble insects (Asaji a praying mantis, Washizu and the other armoured soldiers bugs with wings)."[49] The family emblems on the back of the costumes of Washizu and Miki represent that "the scorpion (Washizu's emblem) preys, fights, is devoured by the female, and the rabbit (Miki's) multiplies, then becomes prey.[50] And moreover, Washizu himself has the image of "a trapped animal fighting for its life".[51] He kills people like insects and becomes a prey like an ensnared animal, being himself handled like a fly in a web by the spirit.

Four private soldiers are talking about the rumour that rats have run away from the castle, which they say is the forewarning of the fire of a house. There stretches a pale shivering hand toward the round hollow of a sliding door, opening it quietly. Inside the room, Washizu is sitting alone, facing the door when it opens. "How is she?", (p. 256) he asks. An old lady with grey hair prostrates outside on the floor, telling him that Asaji has had a miscarriage.[52]

Washizu, stopped by the lady from going to Asaji after the miscarriage, goes back into the room where the helmet with the moon ornament is solemnly set, and shouts, "Fool! Fool!" (p. 256) It is a Japanese swearword (*bakamono*), far from Macbeth's poetical

image of "a poor player" or "an idiot" in the theatrical context of human life. Yet he swears at his life, at fate, at his wife and himself all with the one simple word.

There may be a great difference between Washizu and Macbeth at this point. A. L. Zambrano says:

> *Macbeth* also builds on this theme of transitory life, but where Washizu is unable to express himself and must resort to physical action, Macbeth is an eloquent thinker whose clear perception of his dilemma adds to his self-awareness and guilt.[53]

And she quotes the "tomorrow" speech.

It is often said that Washizu does not have "tragic grandeur"[54] because he has no ability to perceive his tragic situation and to dramatize himself. He only gives us "a barrage of gapes, grunts, shrieks, and snorts".[55] He is "no less sensitive than Macbeth, and no less moral",[56] "not quite the classical tragic hero that Macbeth is in the play".[57]

J. Blumenthal argues that it is partly because of the nature of the medium, which requires physical reality more than narrative "verbality".[58] Macbeth expresses his internal struggle, emotional burstings, and his resigning view of life, but these are all through his own experience based on his action, while Hamlet's words are not replaceable with the mere pictures of his action. Therefore, he says that Kurosawa successfully recast the play in the medium of film and the character Washizu is "the spirit of Macbeth distilled to almost pure materiality".[59]

There is another point in Washizu's character. As Kurosawa comments that he thinks "*Macbeth* is the tragedy of a man who has won status, though he is not talented enough for it," and "Macbeth is such a naive person in his nature",[60] Kurosawa intentionally characterizes him as a man of reticence, who cannot express himself in a sophisticated manner but in a simple, rather barbaric way.

A messenger comes from the First Fort, telling Washizu and his men that the Fort has been surrounded by Inui's troops whose general is Noriyasu accompanying the former lord's son Kunimaru. A second messenger says that the Second Fort is also surrounded by Miki's son Yoshiteru's troops, and a third one says that the defender's troops of these forts went over to the other side, all surging ahead to the Third Fort. In the room where soldiers are ranged, Washizu irritably tramps back and forth, asking if they have any schemes to beat the enemy. They sit in silence, their heads drooped.

Dashing out of the castle, again Washizu gallops through the forest in the same weather as the day he met the spirit. Wearing no armour this time, he gets drenched to the skin. He shouts, calling out the spirit, with water cascading down his face.

With sarcastic laughter, the spirit appears in the white smoke covering "the heap of skeletons in armour" with the "blood-coloured" (p. 258) weed. She says to Washizu, when he asks, out of breath, looking horrendously obsessed, "It is true that Yoshiaki's son will be Lord of *Kumonosu* Castle?", "Oh, you finally came to the last step of delusion. How delightful, delightful!" (p. 258) Then she prophesies that Washizu will never lose until *Kumote* Forest moves towards *Kumonosu* Castle. This parallels the prophecy one of the apparitions tells Macbeth that:

> Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until
> Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinan Hill
> Shall come against him. (IV. i. 107-9)

Washizu will never lose until *Kumote* Forest moves towards *Kumonosu* Castle. After the spirit says this, she turns into three phantoms (or apparitions) one after another. They seem to be dead soldiers, armoured, with pale faces, brandishing long bloody spears. They encourage him in his deed of evil, saying:

> 1ST PHANTOM: (*Laughs*) If you live a demon-like life, be devilish to your heart's content.

. . . . . .

2ND PHANTOM: (*Laughs*) If you build up the heap of corpses, make it as big as your heart's content.

. . . . . .

3RD PHANTOM: (*Laughs*) If you spill blood, let it flow to your heart's content.

(pp. 258-59)

The Apparitions in *Macbeth* play the important role of giving Macbeth three prophecies which involve his later life, but those in the film are not overwhelmingly influential on the hero's future. Instead of the two other announcements, the warning about Macduff and the "none of woman born" prophecy, Kurosawa focuses our attention upon only one, "the Birnam Wood" prophecy, told by the spirit, not by the Phantoms. While it gives the impression that the story is more structured and consistent than eventually to find out that the hero's enemy of destiny is prematurely born by Caesarian operation, the effect of the Phantoms in the scene is rather caricatured and not as dramatic as the original.

In a field, Noriyasu Odagura (the Macduff character) advances his troops towards *Kumote* Forest. The troops invade the labyrinth of the forest, which traps people, like a spider, with its stretches of winding lanes. Noriyasu is familiar with their tactics in the forest. A soldier of Washizu's army flees back from the battle to say they could not help but withdraw.

Washizu appears on the turret. His grotesque laughter resounds over a throng of soldiers looking up at him. He is obsessive like Macbeth when he shouts at a servant with a meaningless word, "Geese". (V. iii. 13) Macbeth knows his "way of life/ Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf," (V. iii. 22-23) anticipating his own end, while he says he "will not be afraid of death and bane" (V. iv. 58) and has "almost forgot the taste of fears". (V. v. 9) He believes, or clings desperately to the prophecy of the Witches as the last hope of his survival or, as it were, the proof of his present existence. Washizu is also afraid. He is so

much afraid of his end that he cannot even imagine what he is afraid of. He laughs. It is ridiculous to feel scared. He will never lose until *Kumote* Forest moves towards the castle..., he tells the audience of the soldiers under the turret.

"Can't see a thing." (p. 262) A guard with a country accent peeps through an observatory, slightly bending his back, closing an eye with the other tightly fixed to the hole.[61] It is night. There are some other guards sleeping behind him. Looking back at them, he asks what the enemy troops are doing even without making bonfires. Out of the complete darkness, breaking the silence, from the direction of the forest where they hide, the sharp sound of axes resounds, and subsequently, the squeals and flaps of birds are heard. The guards wonder.

The next scene is one of the most striking ones in the film. Into the throne room, where the war council is going on, a flock of wild birds, as the viewer only hears in the previous scene, burst from the broadly opened side of a Japanese house toward a garden. It is ominous. The members of the war council are startled. The viewer knows it is the result of their enemy's cutting down the trees of the forest which they are going to use for camouflaging themselves when they advance. Noel Burch refers to the type of the scene as "the evocation of an off-screen event",[62] which causes "*violent agitation*",[63] and he mentions that in most of Kurosawa's films, the contrast "between extreme violence or pathos and moments of static, restrained tension"[64] is seen and the two types of scene are alternate.

Accelerating Washizu's doom, after the off-screen event", his wife Asaji's madness is shown. Hearing the scream of women, Washizu wakes up from a slumber, dashing through a corridor, where he sees some waiting ladies shivering with fear, into Asaji's room. An old lady, the same person as the one who has previously reported her miscarriage

to him, quietly stands by the sliding door of entrance, and looks at Washizu without knowing what to say. A stand with a glittering *kimono* obstructs the view of her. He snatches it off, and sees his wife's miserable appearance there. She is squatting in the corner, with a gesture of washing her hands over a lacquered vessel. Her face is modelled after a Noh mask with golden mad eyes, so the expression she makes looks exactly the same as the mask, which "represents the state of an unearthly feeling of tension".[65]

She murmurs, trying to remove 'unseen' blood from her hands, "There, horrible blood stain . . . Oh, no, still smells of blood . . . oh, these hands , why can they not be wiped clean!" (p. 263) With her thick black hair dishevelled she keeps on wiping her hands without noticing her husband calling her name.

Washizu hears the noise of confusion outside. He gets out of the room, leaving his disturbed wife alone. He finds all his soldiers running in disorder out in the square of the castle. One of the men shouts out, stopped and asked by his irritating master, "My lord! The forest . . . the forest . . . That *Kumote* Forest . . .", ". . . has begun to move . . . and is moving towards our castle". (p. 264)

Running up to the tower, violently pushing aside a guard, he looks into the observatory, and sees that hundreds of green trees of the forest, blurred in a smoky mist, waving and shaking their heads, are literally advancing gradually towards him. The Forest has moved! His horror is now at its peak. He cannot hide any more. The time has come. He feebly takes his steps downstairs, where he finds the mass of soldiers dumbly standing, glaring at him. "Who murdered our former lord?"--- "Traitors!", as soon as Washizu shouts back to them, an arrow grazes past his cheek, and after a moment, tens of arrows are shot at him successively. Washizu is no longer a lord but merely an animal which is going to be slaughtered.

Eventually, he dies with arrows pierced like a "pincushion"[66] or "hedgehog".[67] The last one dramatically pierces his throat. At the moment, there is a pause and perfect silence, where Washizu's face is in close-up for the first time in the film.[68] Noel Burch suggests that the film is structurally based on "a dichotomous principle of tension and relaxation",[69] and in this close-up shot of the climax, the "tense, horizontal alternation between"[70] these two kinds of scenes "is resolved into a vertical orgasm of on-screen violence".[71]

The shot itself is regarded by, as he says, most of the "Western critics"[72] as "grotesque and gratuitous".[73] It is, in a visual sense, very shocking. The viewer actually sees an arrow piercing through a human throat and his face distorted with agony. He dies. He falls to the ground. The body stops moving finally. And then, the solemnity of death pervades the atmosphere of the scene. The crowd is silent.

The troops are still advancing in the field. The people with the cut trees take their steps towards the castle. Far ahead of them, the figure of the black building is enshrounded by mist. The mist covers it little by little until it gets all white . . . The sound of wind is heard. In the mist, the monument in the opening scene appears again. The same song of the chorus starts, and the flute.

It is a perfect ending. There is a kind of circular structure, of which the ending is also the beginning of another story. Zambrano says, the film "ends on the continuing threat of betrayal and revolution".[74]

The image of the eternal repetitions of the earthly world suggests the Buddhist circle of metempsychosis. The idea that there is no ending in this world and this life from our former existence, because the notion that the temporary end of death connects with the next world is rooted deeply in the Japanese mind.[75] In its influence on Noh theatre, the order of performance reflects the idea of continuity, and at the end of one day's programme

they present how the story will continue in a later day's performance. For them the ending means the beginning of endless succession.[76]

* * * * *

By using the tradition of Noh theatre, such as the frequent use of long shots in order to make its form more effective,[77] the introduction of its stage, choreography, instruments, costumes and make-ups, and the borrowing of the image of a story from it, the film has a tendency to be more like a symbolical drama than a psychological one.[78] The characters of men and women are formalized, as those of Noh plays, into representative types of human beings. It shows something totally different from a kind of drama which describes the inner struggle of a hero as a more personal matter.

Because of Kurosawa's study of traditional Japanese culture and arts,[79] the visual image of the film is enriched with the aestheticism of Japanese beauty. The contrast of black and white in the landscape of mist and field is the influence of *sumi*-painting, which he used to learn in his early days as a painter. In Zambrano's essay, the reminiscence of *yamato-e* scrolls is pointed out.[80] As I have described, the architecture of *Kumonosu-jo* and the inside of the castle is attractive for the viewer. And also, the cultural translation of supernatural existence, the forest spirit and Miki's ghost, is especially appealing to the Japanese viewer.

While introducing Japanese culture and arts into the film, Kurosawa vividly describes or enlarges some poetic imagery of the original play;[81] for example in the unnaturalness of weather, the madness of animals, the moving of the forest, and so on. The background of Japanese material of the film strengthens the visual image of the poetry. It does not distort or abandon it.

The chorus of the opening and ending, and the recurrence of the opening shot at the end suggests that Kurosawa regards this story as something endless in a wider scope of human history. Whether it is also the influence of Noh theatre, or the direct moral lesson from Buddhism, as I discussed, there is a circular structure connected with the idea of life succession, which is so called metempsychosis, in the film. The idea is also enlarged through the process of the cultural translation of the play: the earthly repetitions of human beings, the meaningless actions of life, the continual succession of time, and the hopeless procession of "tomorrow".

Chapter II

Yukio Ninagawa's *Macbeth*

A gigantic Buddhist family altar on the stage: this was the starting point that Ninagawa used in his plan for the staging of the play.[1] As with his later production of *Peer Gynt* at the Barbican in 1994, which had a huge frame of a television set for its stage, and the 1988 production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* in Tokyo, the stage of which was framed by a specimen box of butterflies, the gigantic altar shows his taste[2] to enclose a stage space by a gigantic version of something which is small in reality. A family altar, sacred to ancestors, is still commonly seen at a Japanese house, but it is usually no bigger than a chest of drawers.

The altar is not only familiar in our daily life but it is also something nostalgic in the memory of the dead. It gives an impression to the Japanese audience as follows:

> Sitting on the seat, confronted with a gigantic Buddhist altar dominating on the stage, you will be excited with expectations . . . A Buddhist altar (*butsudan*) is filled with the various feelings of our ancestry; joy, grief, hatred and curse. What would Ninagawa produce from it?[3]

Or another reviewer reports:

> Though the figure is a Buddhist altar, it is associated with the main building of a large temple. It reminds me that the main temple (*hondo*) and its veranda used to be the place for people to listen to a sermon, or for the old to spend their vacant time. When I think of it, the tragedy of a traitor Macbeth played inside the altar, seems to be a retributive story, which would have happened a long time ago. The audience feel as if they were listening to the story told by a Buddhist priest Ninagawa.[4]

Very naturally, when the director first produced the performance in Tokyo in 1980, five years before it was seen in England, he was obliged to make the play closer to the taste of his Japanese audience. Although nowadays we do not find it incompatible to see western plays performed by Japanese actors in stagings with a European atmosphere, the cultural adaptation was essential for Ninagawa, whose intention is always to send a direct message to "those who live a common life".[5]

The most difficult problem in adapting the play into Japanese culture "without changing the words or the story"[6] is, according to him, the "rhetoric" used by Shakespeare, which "mostly goes upward: Heaven or God".[7] Through his artistic insight, he perceives that there is some inexplicable nature of Christian mentality in the play which does not exist in the spiritual climate of Japan. Therefore, he simply tells of his starting point: "If I replace the rhetoric with something visual, what will become of it?"[8] The stage of a Buddhist altar is the representation of this design of "visualization", and the reaction of the Japanese audience, as shown above, is the retrospection of their past image in the altar, where their religious mind, whether they deny or not, is deeply rooted.

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the stage production of Ninagawa's *Macbeth* as another instance of the cultural adaptation of the play. There are two parts in this production divided by intermission.

"Entering the theatre, you will see the stage is an enormous *butsudan*",[9] Ninagawa writes in his promptbook. It is always a kind of surprise for the people who first enter a theatre to see a stage represent another dimensional space quite separate from their ordinary life. It mostly evokes a certain kind of excitement in audience before a performance starts. it is known from his writing that he particularly aims at this type of bizarre effect:

> The eccentric set suggests a theatrical world, and it must oppose the ordinariness of the audience by its shine as a foreign substance.[10]

The hall resounds with the weighty tones of a temple bell, which gradually blends with the chorus of Faure's *Sanctus* from his *Requiem*. The harmony of the original sound of the bell and the western classic music presents the thematic meaning of the production in its opening. In contrast with Kurosawa who changed the story completely into a Japanese reading, Ninagawa seems to create something neither Japanese nor western by mixing them together. When the music fades in, even the Japanese audience, familiar with the Buddhist stage and the temple bell sound, start thinking it is very exotic. It is already 'exotic', though, to see Shakespeare, familiar to most of them, through their own cultural translation.

To the sound of the bell, two old women, humbly clothed in the style of country folk, carrying large bamboo boxes on their backs, walk through the passages from both sides behind the theatre, slowly and unsteadily toward the altar. Reaching the stage, they climb the stairs reminiscent of the stone steps of a temple, bowing deeply to the altar, praying for a while with the hands put together, and slide open its black doors. It is a ritual. They sit all through the performance at both sides of the stage, eating their lunch, crying and laughing in reaction to the play. "They are living their daily life",[11] Ninagawa writes. In that sense, they are the representatives of the audience. They are also mediators to transmit the direct emotion from the characters through their "ordinariness" to the audience.

It is interesting to think why they should have been old women. The director does not comment on this point in his promptbook, but as far as those women in the production are concerned, they have simple and natural emotions as ordinary old ladies have. In terms

of the modern western imagery, their observation of the world is reminiscent of T. S. Eliot's "ancient women"[12] in "Preludes" in *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917).

There is a huge latticework inside the *butsudan*. "The story of the dead"[13] now begins. There is a thunderstorm. Half-transparently seen through the latticework, three ominous shapes are moving, twisting in a 'flower storm' of cherry blossoms (*hana-fubuki*). Their red and golden *kimono* and their long hair are streaming in the wind, two of them have black hair, one of them has white hair, with silver tiaras resplendent in the lightning. "When shall we three meet again?", (I. i. 1) one of them starts speaking in a falsetto voice. It is very formally spoken in Japanese.

The Witches are played by *onna-gata* --- *kabuki* actors who play female roles. In *kabuki*, they are as appealing in their beauty and sometimes in their coquetry[14] as real women. But the Witches of *onna-gata*, which probably figure the roles of young princesses, are so weird in their sexual neutrality that, just as in the play, Banquo cannot identify them correctly. In contrast to the weirdness of Shakespeare's Witches, however, their colourful and dazzling costumes have a different image from dark and filthy Weird Sisters that usually appear in the western productions. The combination of ugliness and beauty in those *kabuki* witches represents another cultural symbol, *oni* or *hannya*: an evil spirit incarnated in a beautiful woman or a beauty who has suffered from lovesickness transfigured into a devil.[15] It is a very well-known image in both ancient literature and theatre. Lovesick women who change into the incarnation of the deep-seated grudge against their unfaithful lovers are, because of the sadness of their existence or the tenacious strength of their emotion of love, regarded as the symbol of 'profound beauty'; *yugen*.[16]

The cherry blossoms are incessantly falling behind the latticework. After the Witches vanish with thunder, soldiers cross over the stage from both sides. Duncan with a

golden *kimono* praises his "valiant cousin" (I. ii. 24) in the centre of the pale pink carpet of cherry petals. Then the lights go down. The spotlight remains on the two old ladies eating their lunch beside the stage.

The sound of drums is heard. ("A drum, a drum . . . " [I. iii. 30]) The light is as red as blood. The *kabuki* witches dance about with fans, casting a spell as "The Weird Sisters, hand in hand . . . ". (I. iii. 32) Macbeth in black with a *gohei* (pendant paper strips in a *Shinto* shrine; a sacred staff with the cut papers is used by the priests for cleansing heart from sins, inviting the descent of the gods, or warding off misfortune)[17] round his neck, and Banquo appear, riding on the rickshaw'horses' supported each by two persons with masks. In the spring haze with blossoms falling, their figures are dimly veiled behind the lattice.

The line "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (I. iii. 38) is spoken in a rather exaggeratedly formal way by Mikijiro Hira, who played the role in the first performance of 1980 in the Nissei Theatre in Tokyo and the Edinburgh Festival in 1985. Banquo's following speech, "How far is't called to Forres?" (I. iii. 39), is spoken in a contrasting, offhand manner. When the Witches vanish "into the air" (I. iii. 81), the lattice opens, where the audience see, in the place like the precincts of a shrine, the full red moon above the navy blue sky. (The red moon symbolizes an ominous event.)

In front of the screen of a golden *byobu*, Duncan is sitting on the throne, waiting for "those in commission" (I. iv. 2) for the execution of Cawdor. On the gilded screen, a cherry tree is drawn, full of magnificent blossoms, representing the glory of the person who sits before it. It is used later also for Macbeth's throne. In contrast to the falling cherry blossoms, the pictorial flowers on the flat screen make the scenes quiescent and inactive: in

this scene, they present the secure status of Duncan's kingdom, on the other hand in Macbeth's throne, their fake beauty implies the vanity of his worldly power.

Cherry blossom in itself has so many metaphorical meanings in Japanese literature. One of the most representative *tanka* (a Japanese verse of a thirty-one syllables) in *Kokin-wakashu* (a collection of *tanka* edited in about 905 under Emperor Daigo) is the one written by Tomonori Kino:

> Hisakata no hikari nodokeki haru no hi ni shizu kokoro naku hana no chiru ran. (How regretful I feel to see those cherry blossoms falling ceaselessly in the calmness of the light of a spring day!)

The poet deplores the mortality and transience of the flowers, and praises their beauty all the better for being ephemeral. As in the poetry, cherry blossoms are the symbol of beauty and transience in old literature.

In modern literature, however, although they still remain the source of inspiration for literary writers, the imagery is slightly changed in such as Motojiro Kajii. They are the symbol of death and beauty. Ninagawa in his autobiography quotes a passage from the writer and shows us where the image of his use of the flowers comes from:

> " A dead body is buried under a cherry tree. You might as well believe it. Because, isn't it incredible how beautiful it blooms? As I cannot believe the beauty, I have been so insecure these couple of days. But now, I know. Under a cherry tree, a dead body is buried."
>
> (Motojiro Kajii)
>
> One day, if a cherry tree of light pink changes into the colour of blood, and if the red petals fall down slowly, slowly to the ground in the evening light . . . It is a horrible sight. It is, indeed, an apocalyptic sight . . . Dreamingly beautiful were the red moon inside the *butsudan* and the red blossoms endlessly fluttering down. And there dies Macbeth, like an infant, rounding his body.[18]

Komaki Kurihara's Lady Macbeth appears on the stage--- a chamber, with three candles flickering on each side. Her "raven"[19] hair tied up on the top of her head, hangs down on her waist, contrasts strikingly with the colour of her red *kimono*. A gold hair-

ornament shines every time she moves. Slowly with a gliding walk, she advances, reciting a scroll from memory in a confident manner, while rolling it up again.

She takes a black lacquered cello, which was placed in the centre of the stage like part of the decoration of the chamber, and plays rapturously after the words:

> . . . Hie thee hither,
> That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
> And chastise with the valour of my tongue
> All that impedes thee from the golden round
> Which Fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
> To have thee crowned withal. (I. v. 24-29)

Suddenly interrupted by a messenger, who tells of Duncan's visit to their castle, she goes into a state of exaltation in the next soliloquy: " The raven himself is hoarse/ That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan . . . " (l. 37-38) At the entrance of Macbeth, she coquettishly approaches him, panting from the excitement of the thought of their future. (" . . . , and I feel now/ The future in the instant" l. 56) This speech is translated into Japanese by Yushi Odashima, whose translation Ninagawa used, as " . . . , and I feel now as if I was *breathing* [italics mine] in the future".[20] Macbeth, at this moment, slides his hand into the bosom of her *kimono* from behind, which is a stylized form of the love scenes of *kabuki* (*nureba*), showing sexual innuendo very strikingly in this scene.

Kurihara's interpretation of the "unsex"-ed Lady Macbeth paradoxically takes on a more intensified sexuality. Different from the image of Sarah Siddons' "fierce, eagerly murderous wife" against her "noble, reluctantly murderous husband"[21], or the succession of "an affectionate wife"[22] from Helen Faucit and Ellen Terry in the 19th century to Violet Vanbrugh in Beerbohm Tree's production in the early 20th century, the femininity in Kurihara's Lady Macbeth is so enticing both "to bed" and to murder. Michael Billington

says that "sex and dominance are for her indistinguishable",[23] and Donald Cooper in *The Times* reports that she uses "all the arts of submission and allure to get her way".[24]

In front of the lattice, Duncan and his party, having arrived in the castle of Macbeth, are welcomed by their hostess, wearing an overgarment glittering in the colour of a silver fox, opens the latticed door from inside.

Hearing the laughter of a banquet in an inner room, Macbeth begins his soliloquy of Act I scene vii. Into the dark, cold chamber lit with a bluish light, which seems to suggest that nobody has been there before him, his lady, her silvery costume shining in the feeble blue light, enters soundlessly, taking on the ghostly atmosphere. She hits her husband's face, when he timidly questions, "If we should fail?" (l. 59), the scarlet lining of her garment at her feet revealed for a moment like a flash. They exit hand in hand, both laughing, quite contented with the concluding words of Macbeth: "False face must hide what the false heart doth know." (l. 83)

Entrances are always slow in the production as they are seen in Noh drama: Macbeth appears on the stage where Banquo and Fleance are talking in the moonlight, hiding himself in a long garment, raising it up over his head like a *kimono* hanger. (It is an upright stand of a 'T' shape for hanging *kimono.*) He approaches them very slowly and quietly like a stalking animal, in an unusual movement which attracts the eyes of the audience. Also, Lady Macbeth, in Act II scene ii, enters slowly. She is intoxicated. Staggering slightly, stammering, she speaks: That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold;/ What hath quenched them, hath given me fire. (l. 56-57)

This is the indication of her weakness as a woman. She, in order to remove her fear, takes a great quantity of alcohol before their deed, so that she cannot even walk or speak properly. In some productions, however, Lady Macbeth looks totally sober, showing her

strength still in this scene. In the text, even though saying that she is 'made bold' and 'given fire' by the drink she had, she is startled with the shriek of an owl and the shout of her husband, which brings her out in a cold sweat just a second after saying the lines quoted earlier. The weakness she shows becomes more clear in her words: Had he not resembled/ My father as he slept, I had done't. (l. 13-14)

Kurihara's Lady Macbeth emphasizes, especially in the murder scene, the fragile aspect of her character, which very well explains her somnambulism in a later scene. She looks as scared as her husband when she shows her bloody hands, saying that: 'My hands are of your colour, but I shame/ To wear a heart so white.' (l. 63-64) She is apparently upset with the deed that they have done while feigning calmness to reassure her husband.

Macbeth, with red splashes in his clothes and his hair, takes his wife's bloody hand, drawing it towards his lips, kissing and rubbing the palm, leaving a blood stain around his mouth. When the knocking of the gate is heard, they both exit in madness.

A porter, played by the actor who plays one of the Witches, appears on the stage with a scarlet loincloth and Japanese wooden clogs, hanging a towel from his neck like a country farmer. He is plump, bald, and nearly naked except for the loincloth. When he opens the gate, Macduff and Lennox come in, giving him a contemptuous look.

In front of the lattice, while Ross and an Old Man talk about convulsions of nature which occurred the night before, the glow of the sunset as red as blood shines behind them, piercing through the latticework. A crow caws in the sky. The croak is heard, moving from one side of the stage, vanishing to the other. This is a typical portrait of Japanese evenings, which is sung in a nursery song:[25] a sunset glow and a caw of a crow. The image of these is very innocent and peaceful in the song, but they are not so on the stage at this moment. The

pleasant imagery of the song is used just to foreground a sense of evil as the cherry blossoms often represent death.

Standing in front of the golden screen with the pictorial cherry blossoms, Banquo reveals his ambition to the audience both in his face and words: 'Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all, . . . Why by the verities on thee made good/ May they not be my oracles as well, . . . ' (III. i. 1-9) The screen is flung open to show Macbeth and his wife. He is clothed in a dark green velvet jacket fringed with a gold frill around the neck, sitting on a throne in a stately manner. After the other guests and his lady leave him alone on a vacant stage, two assassins, dressed in the *ninja*[26] style, all muffled in black, approach him, running up like dogs to their master's feet, having a confidential talk with him close to the audience at the front of the stage. Macbeth, again left alone, closes the scene saying: Banquo, thy soul's flight,/ If it find Heaven, must find it out tonight. (III. i. 141-42)

During the change of scene in the dark, one of the old women on one side of the stage, choking on her lunch, drinks a cup of tea in a flurry from her thermos flask. And in the change after the assassination of Banquo, she takes some powdery medicine wrapped in a paper, which is supposed to be prescribed for her to be taken after each meal. They are, indeed, "living their daily life". It is even comical for them to cling to their everyday practice which is unrelated to the proceeding of the performance. It seems that their actions could be viewed as lessening the tension of the tragic atmosphere. Nevertheless, their action strangely corresponds to the real life of the audience and to the unreal event of the drama, so that the audience can hardly differentiate who is truly 'living a daily life': those old women, the characters on the stage, or perhaps the audience themselves.

These three levels of structure: the audience, the Old Ladies and the characters in the play, coincide with the three dimensional construction of the stage: the Buddhist altar,

the latticework, and the inner recesses of the space. As regards the three dimensions of the stage, both *The Times* [18 Sep. 1987] and *The Asahi Evening Press* [8 Dec. 1987] offer commentary. *The Times* reports:

> The production has three depths of focus: for stage reality; dream-like glimpses through the latticework; and the full depth of the stage where the main action is played out . . . [27]

And in *The Asahi Evening Press*:

> The Buddhist altar which enframes the proscenium is usually open, but sometimes it shows us the tragedy also through the sliding latticed door set inside of it: Therefore, the relation of the time and space between the stage and the audience is to be changed in three strata.[28]

If the reality of life in the audience is reflected upon the Buddhist altar, which reminds the Japanese viewer of an everyday act in life; the event which takes place inside the stage, far from the viewer's "ordinariness", is transmitted through the lattice, being filtered into a fantasy. In the same way, the acts of the Old Ladies "living a daily life" mediate between the stage characters and the audience, showing that the tragic heroes on the stage are sharing their emotional struggle with each member of the audience just as they share their 'ordinariness' with them: this changes the unreality of seeing a play into the verisimilitude of experiencing a tangible life.

Ninagawa's art, intriguingly, always features this use of intermediaries in both stage device and supporting actors, which links our ordinary life with his theatrically created world.[29]

In her chamber, Lady Macbeth in red, looking into a hand glass, having her hair tied by a gentlewoman, asks her about Banquo in a very distressed manner. After the servant has gone, she begins to speak to herself in the mirror:

> . . . Nought's had, all's spent,
> Where our desire is got without content;
> 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,

Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy. (III. ii. 5-8)

She breaks down crying, throwing away the mirror, flinging herself on her face. Sensing her husband coming into the chamber, she raises her body up so as to pretend to be calm, picking up the mirror again, asking the figure in it: "How now, my lord, why do you keep alone, . . . " (III. ii. 9) He takes the mirror from her hand, saying: ". . . make our faces/ Vizards to our hearts, disguising what they are." (III. ii. 36-37) And shouts out in deep distress: "O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife---/ Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance lives." (ll. 39-40) Helping his lady into her gown with its pattern of cherry blossoms, which later will be symbolically held by him in the scene after her death is reported, he invites her to "go with" (l. 59) him. But the distracted wife would not take her husband's hand and leaves alone before him, without speaking a word.

They started together but now they are apart in mind. Their anxiety and distraction come from the same source that they have murdered their king for their own ambition, but what Macbeth is concerned about now is to continue to kill people in order to get "comfort" (l. 42), while his wife takes no action, only remaining insecure "in doubtful joy". (l. 8)

This 'separation' of their mental bonds is often expressed in the staging of the play through their separate exits in both this scene and the banquet scene. Although there is no particular stage direction for their individual exit in the text, it is a very effective way of directing the process of the dissociation as wife and husband, and Ninagawa has also used it successfully.

Michael Billington mentions that the production "is surrounded by colour and light" while the English audience "are used to seeing *Macbeth* presented in Stygian gloom"[30]. This is seen most clearly in the shining beauty of the scene of Banquo's murder. In the

storm of cherry blossoms, through the lattice, the audience see the magnificently picturesque death in the dazzling blue light. Smoky spring haze enfolds the stage, allowing their terrible act dimly to be seen. In stark contrast to the brightness of the white cherry blossoms in the daylight, the two assassins in black come onto the stage. Banquo and Fleance flicker out of the incessant fall of flowers, running to and fro, crossing swiftly with those black shadows. When Banquo is killed, his hair is untied, hanging down onto his shoulders, showing the misery of the static body on the ground, where the fallen petals are now spread like a carpet.

The Times commented:

> Ninagawa's art is largely one of transition and surprise association: switching between point-blank and long-distance view points, and setting horrendously violent events within a delicately lyrical environment.[31]

'Violence' and 'lyricism' are in the same scene; *Macbeth*, a dark murderous play in beautiful surroundings. The coexistence of two opposites is another feature of his production.

As an example of the staging of *Macbeth* in the past which sought for the visual beauty as Ninagawa did, there was the production of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree in 1911 in England. It is said that he pursued "the pre-Raphaelite cult of beauty" so keenly that "Macbeth's poetic imagination", about which he was inspired by A. C. Bradley, whose *Shakespearean Tragedy* had just published in 1904, seven years before the performance, "seems to have been aesthetic rather than moral".[32] In pursuing the aesthetic, he cut many savage scenes from the text for aesthetic reasons, like the murder of Banquo and that of Lady Macduff and her children, so that, in the end, the audience "were never shaken with terror".[33]

Ninagawa says in his promptbook, criticizing an anonymous production of *Macbeth*: "Why do they look down on what we see? Why abandon the pleasure of eyes?"[34] Certainly, he is an "aesthetic" director, who most treasures the spectacular beauty and the visual grandeur for his own staging. However, unlike Tree, even in his aesthetic view on the play, he never "abandons" the ugly sight of killing or any horrible scenes of murder. Rather, he tends to foreground those horrendous human acts through presenting the beautiful scenery surrounding their tragedy.

Here the themes of death and beauty again emerge, overlapping with an inseparable image of cherry trees,---beautiful blossoms under which corpses are buried. The effect is "transition and surprise association" or John Masefield's expression "surprise and suspense",[35] which shocks the audience with the most vivid description of life: a life---so violently close to death.

We move on to Act III scene iv, which is the last scene before the intermission. Through the latticed door, a golden *byobu*, which is the same as Act III scene i, is seen. A banquet is ready. On both sides of the stage inside the screen, the guests are sitting, making a merry noise with conversation and laughter. An assassin appears in front of the lattice, where the light is dark in contrast with the brightness inside. Macbeth puts his head out of the lattice, which is slightly opened, peeping at the man like a fainthearted child. At the centre of the stage, far back, looking down at the guests, who fan out on the floor, a throne is set without its ruler. It turns around in the dark, showing Banquo's ghost with a severed hand of his own.

After the guests have left the stage, Macbeth and his wife are alone in the light of burning candles. Macbeth is occupied with his own thoughts about the next action he should take, continuing talking to himself obsessively smelling the bunch of his long hair

hanging down from a top-knot. He is obsessed, too, with the smell of blood, and he is obsessed with it even before his wife. He strikes his own cheek, saying, "We are yet but young in deed". (III. iv. 145) The gong of a temple starts ringing just as it had done at the opening. The music heightens while the view of the stage fades into darkness.

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Part II starts with the sound of the temple gong and the music of Faure's *Sanctus* as Part I had begun and ended. Now it seems familiar to the audience hearing the oriental sound of the gong mixed with the western classical music to form the thematical tone of the production. Both are a sound that leads the listener to the world beyond: from the living to the dead. (At least, the gong of a temple reminds the Japanese audience of their ancestors.) The old women, intermediaries between this world and that, open the door of the altar as they did before. There we see in a red light through the latticework three Witches of *kabuki* female roles with *gohei* dancing in the incessant storm of cherry blossoms. It is beautiful scenery, not like the dirty and ugly image of Shakespeare's cauldron scene, but they look strangely beautiful like *hina-ningyo* (the Japanese dolls for the Girls' Festival on 3 March), or princesses in *kabuki*, or even like *miko* (a maiden in the service of a shrine.) When Macbeth enters with a black costume like a *yamabushi* (a Buddhist monk), the lattice opens and he starts, "I conjure you, by that which you profess,/ Howe'er you come to know it, answer me" (IV.i. 64-65). With "Thunder" (in the stage direction after l. 83) the lattice is closed behind Macbeth and the Witches. The First Apparition appears carrying an armed head followed by the Second, with a bloody fetus crying like a cat, bathed in red light. The Third is a boy in a white loincloth wearing a helmet made of a white paper,

reminiscent of an *origami* helmet made in the Boys' Festival on 5 May, and he carries a twig of a cherry blossom.

When the Witches say, "Show his eyes, and grieve his heart; / Come like shadows, so depart" (l. 125-26) in thunder and lightning, the eight descendants of Banquo proceed on stage, followed by Banquo himself, in a white shroud, a candle in hand, directing the procession. Each of his descendants has a sword or a mirror in his hand, and they all exit, walking across the stage.

> I'll charm the air to give a sound,
> While you perform your antic round:
> That this great King may kindly say,
> Our duties did his welcome pay. (IV. i. 144-47)

The Witches shout the words out in the characteristic tone of *kabuki*, and simultaneously the lattice opens with it. They disappear inside the lattice with thunder and lightning again.

Lady Macduff, with *o-haguro* (tooth dye in black: cf. Asaji in *Throne of Blood*), appears holding a baby in her arm, followed by a boy, walking down from the centre of the stage to the front. After a black *ninja* style messenger enters, three assassins also in *ninja* style appear, killing the boy with a sword, piercing through the baby taken from its mother. Lady Macduff spontaneously falls to cover her slaughtered baby with her body, and soon after that, the light is turned off and only her screaming is dreadfully heard in the darkness.

The Old Ladies beside the stage, again in the spotlights, wipe their eyes and noses with handkerchieves, sobbing with deep lamentation for the slaughtered. They cry in the same way after the next scene of Macduff's mourning for his wife and children, showing their great sympathy with those who were killed.

These two scenes are, for the first time in the play, described from the perspective of those who are sacrificed. With regards to the murder scene of Lady Macduff and children, Richard David points out that:

> It is not until this moment that the full horror of Macbeth's actions bursts upon the audience. Duncan's murder takes place off stage, and out of sight and out of mind; Banquo's we see, but it is in broad daylight, cold, deliberate, wanton, without any shadow of disguise or palliation. And immediately we are switched from this savage, bestial, devil-possessed Scotland to England, humane, civilized England, the England of Edward the confessor. Sanity is here to redress the balance; the audience changes sides, and the tragic curve begins to dip towards its setting.[36]

From the scene of their murder, he says, "the audience changes sides" against the murderer, and this works as a turning point, in a stage production, toward the ending of the tragedy, which draws a "tragic curve" in it.

What Ninagawa has experimented with is to emphasize this changing of sides. The two old ladies are very much emotionally involved with the killing of the mother and children, showing their sympathetic grief also to the father in the next scene. However, the old ladies also cry for Macbeth in later scenes, where their emotion is no longer a matter of taking "sides", but recalling something more essential to human mind: something that is, at least, *not* based on moralistic judgement.

In the dark interior of a temple, some massive statues of *kongo-rikishi* (the Deva Kings) stand half shadowed by the light coming through the pits of the walls surrounding three sides of the stage. They look furious, posing as warriors fighting against their enemies. In the middle of those statues, Malcolm and Macduff lament for the miserable situation of their country and swear to battle with Macbeth.

Ross, dressed as a traveller, with a big cloth bag on his back, appears on stage to tell Macduff of the ferocious murder of his family. Macduff roars up to heaven, brandishing

his sword, saying that "...; did Heaven look on,/ And would not take their part?". (IV. iii. 223-24) The lamentation of the man who has lost his wife and children is rather over-emotionally expressed. He cries and shouts, curses and blasphemes. This reminds the audience of some *kabuki* plays, where parents' grief for their children's death is always lachrymal, fully expressed in tears.[37]

"The night is long that never finds the day." (l. 240) When the words are spoken by Malcolm, with a full of revengeful emotion and hope for recovering a peace from their enemy, the chaos which has been brought by Macbeth seems to be restored into order. The audience who has witnessed the chaotic deeds which Macbeth has done up to this scene now expects an ordered, peaceful world to come after a long, dark night.

It is a hope which may be also brought to the real world where the audience lives, so that it gives the audience a kind of relief, or relaxation from Macbeth's night-marish deeds which they have seen through the play. It is what the world ought to be and the people's grief has to be rewarded as much as it can be. This is the most natural kind of emotion the audience is supposed to have, and the emotion is evoked by this scene, where Macduff and Malcolm show their humanity with their sometimes 'overemotional' acting.

Into the blue light of a dark chamber, a doctor and a waiting gentlewoman enter with a torch. At the back of the stage, a light flickers through the lattice. It turns out to be carried by a pale, dishevelled, totally disordered-looking Lady Macbeth coming into the room.

She glares at one fixed point in the air obsessively. She is wearing a silver *kimono* as a nightgown, which makes her whitely painted face look more pale and deranged. She starts the motion which shows her obsessive concern about 'uncleansed' hands. The remarkable gesture she makes is that she pours water over her hands with a ladle, which is

usually wooden, still commonly used for washing hands and rinsing out the mouth in Buddhist temples or in the Japanese tea ceremony. To wash hands and mouth before entering tea rooms or the main building of holy temples means cleansing and calming both body and mind.

The ladle itself is unseen. The gesture is mimed only by the motion of her hands. But the image of the ladle strikingly reminds the Japanese audience of pouring water to purify themselves before they enter some sacred place. Lady Macbeth unsuccessfully washes the dirt from her hands. It can never be washed away even by pouring water. She starts rubbing her feebly shaking hands obsessively, saying that "Yet here's a spot". (l. 30)

The more she speaks, the more disordered she becomes. While saying, "The Thane of Fife, had a wife---where is she now?" (l. 40-41) she starts rolling over on the floor, with her long black hair untied, tangling around her neck, hanging over her face. With her dishevelled hair, she wipes her hands, trying to remove the stain of blood on them, "What, will these hands ne'er be clean?" (l. 41)

The disorder of her mind is well represented by the handling of her hair. She even tries to use it as a towel to wipe off the blood stain on her hands, which is a very effective action to convince the audience that not only the stain but the smell of blood comes also from her hair when she says, "Here's the smell of the blood still---all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand". (l. 48-49)

The smell obsession is corresponding to Macbeth's sniffing his hair in an earlier scene. After the guests have gone in Act III scene iv, he takes a bunch of hair, smells it and says, "It will have blood they say: blood will have blood". (III. iv. 123) Moreover, it reminds the audience of his sticky red hair bathed in the blood of Duncan in Act II scene ii.

Not only hands but hair conveys their obsession with smell, and intriguingly, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are both obsessed with the smell of hands and hair in the same way.[38]

Lady Macbeth bursts into tears, saying, "I tell you yet again Banquo's buried". (ll. 60-61) She shows a full of remorse for "what's done", which "cannot be undone". (l. 64) Dragging her gown, slipped off from her body, she exits "to bed". (l. 63) She looks back to the front, where she sees the invisible shadow of her husband following her and she urgently calls him to bed, and disappears into the darkness lit only by her candle.

"Bring me no more reports, let them fly all." (V. iii. 1)---Sitting alone on a wooden chair like a child, with his legs bent on it, Macbeth rejects all the reports irritably. He wears a light green kimono with a pattern of purple cherry blossoms. He looks small, in the way he hunches his body on the small chair, calling Seyton in a feeble voice. When he says, "I have lived long enough: my way of life/ Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,..." (V. iii. 22-23) he pathetically shows his emotion, shedding tears like a poor child. And he once again calls Seyton in the end of the speech as if he seeks help from his mother.

It is self-pity that Macbeth presents here, rather than cool observation of his own life, and it intensifies sorrow, sadness, and solitude in his final moment, which causes the sympathetic emotion of the audience while the old ladies are sobbing and wiping their tears with handkerchieves at the side of the stage. Macbeth turns his weak, fragile side into a violent, aggressive mood in the next moment. When he hears from the Doctor about the ill condition of his wife, he pushes aside the Doctor, shouting, "Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it." (l. 46)

The sound of drums and the shouts of people in battle are heard at the back of the stage. One of them, Seyward, asks, "What wood of *cherry blossoms* is this before us?" (V. iv. 6)[39]

> MALCOLM: Let every soldier hew him down a bough
> And bear't before him, thereby shall we shadow
> The numbers of our host, and make discovery
> Err in report of us. (V. iv. 4-7)

Here we expect to see them bearing the boughs of cherry blossoms for the moving of Birnam Wood.

The director comments on the idea of Birnam Wood as cherry blossom as follows:

> When I ever saw someone's production of *Macbeth*, the Birnam Wood was poor pine trees and I was sick of looking at its ascending. Why does he make light of the visible? Why does he abandon the pleasure of eyes? Tens of cherry blossoms in full bloom are moving from left to right in the framework of the Buddhist altar..... How magnificent Birnam Wood it is going to be!---I was really complacent about it.[40]

Ninagawa is a kind of director who very much treasures the visual effects of his stage as understood from above, and he overwhelms the audience with its spectacular magnificence. And in his *Macbeth*, everywhere in almost every scene, the incessant falling of cherry blossoms can be seen, and it gives the production the strong image of those flowers, which threaten as well as charm the audience by the association with death and beauty.[41] The Birnam Wood of cherry trees is, therefore, in its combined image of death and beauty, strikingly evocative. The audience now expects the hero's death under the beautiful falling of cherry blossoms. On the command of Malcolm, all the soldiers exit to the bass sound of drum beats, passing through two passages through the audience to the doors.

In the darkness, one spot of candlelight is turned on and it increases successively as someone lights candles one by one. Gradually, the figure of Macbeth is seen dimly coming out of the darkness. He carries a candle, lighting numerous others that are set up around the stage. When they are all lit, the stage becomes like a place for prayers especially for reposing souls in a shrine or a temple. Ninagawa notes:

> Innumerable candles on the stage. They are flickering like those of the Nenbutsu Temple. Macbeth lights them up so earnestly as to suppress his fear, and lies down there. Remember the dead! He looks like a child who is never satisfied until he collects toys as many as he can... The moment that everybody ever has---self-abandonment![42]

The Nenbutsu Temple that he mentions in the note is one of the most famous temples in Nara, which is well known for laying to rest the souls of aborted or miscarried babies, where numerous candles are placed all over the ground of sandstones. There are three symbolical meanings that can be found in this scene, when the image of the Nenbutsu Temple and the stage of a Buddhist altar are taken into consideration.

Firstly, Macbeth, who lights those candles, is like a prayer to lay souls to rest. The souls he is praying for are thought to be the dead whom he has killed. If so, the action he takes by lighting the candles presents his regret or redemption for his own sin. Secondly, when he lies down among the candles, he becomes closer to the dead. He is, subconsciously or not, lying down with the dead, which he desired in an earlier scene:

> ---Better be with the dead,
> Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
> Than on the torture of the mind to lie
> In restless ecstasy. (III. ii. 21-24)

Thirdly, he is 'with the dead' on the stage of a Buddhist altar, where deceased ancestors are worshipped with some offerings of candles, incense sticks, and food. From the audience, who are seeing the production within the framework of the altar, Macbeth looks like one of the ancestors worshipped inside it. He is, even from the beginning of the production, one of the dead, who shows his life story to the audience. Or it presents the idea that the audience, remember one of their ancestors, Macbeth, in their deep commemoration of his history.

Those candles on stage also seem to be foreshadowing the 'tomorrow' speech in which he refers to a candle, but when they take on the meaning of the offering to the dead,

the stage of the Buddhist altar shows the significant link with the director's interpretation of the play. Ninagawa writes about how he arrived at the idea of the altar stage as follows:

> At first what I was troubled with was the problem of rhetoric. The rhetoric used by Shakespeare mostly goes upwards: Heaven or God. That kind of rhetoric can hardly be found in Japan.....If we replace the rhetoric, which is too difficult for Japanese to understand, with something visual without changing the words or adapting the story, what will become of it?[43]

Thus the idea occurred to him "to replace the rhetoric" of Shakespeare with something visually Japanese. And he continues:

> In the middle of such consideration, I went back to my parents' home and offered an incense stick to a *butsudan*. When I closed the door of the altar, I could see the inside of it through the latticed gaps of the door. It struck me. In *Macbeth*, most of the characters die in the end, but when we face a *butsudan*, we collate our present time with the past by remembering the dead. Thus I had an inspiration: If we think this play is a story of our ancestors which we peep through an altar, or the reflection of our mind remembering our ancestors, it will be the effective way to transmit the play to the Japanese living ordinary lives.[44]

In the scene of the 'tomorrow' speech, Macbeth lies down with the dead inside the *butsudan* stage. This shows most clearly the director's intention that he is one of the audience's ancestors and the whole play is a story of their inner reflection remembering the dead of the past.

A cry of women is heard from upstage, and Macbeth is told that his wife died. After he says, "She should have died hereafter" (V. v. 7) in a grave tone, he falls into a long silence. Taking the gown, brought by Seyton to the room, which Lady Macbeth had worn in the sleepwalking scene, Macbeth draws it close to his mouth, rubs it saying, "There would have been a time for such a word". (l. 18) Without any pause, then he starts the 'tomorrow' speech. His sorrow for the death of Lady Macbeth is the clear subtext for his words. His eyes fill with tears, as he laments for both his life and his wife's death. He cries out with cynical laughter, "Signifying nothing". (l. 28)

A messenger enters, informing Macbeth of the moving of Birnam Wood. He curses the equivocation of the Witches' prophecy. Now he loses his power, beginning even "to be aweary of the sun". (l. 49) He shades his eyes with his hand from one of the lights on him. "Ring the alarum bell, blow wind, come wrack,/ At least we'll die with harness on our back." (l. 51-52) He encourages himself, shouting with all his strength. While dragging his lady's gown with his left hand, he holds a candle high with his right hand as he walks towards the exit.

Through the latticed door, in the hazy spring air, tens of cherry trees are waving in the wind. The light is blue, and the blossoms are all pinkish white. The petals are ceaselessly falling, reflecting the blue light with a flickering effect. Some are towards the right, and some are towards the left, blowing in the gentle breeze. Now the audience see the scenery of a Birnam Wood of cherry trees for the first time, which is stunningly beautiful beyond expectation.

The sound of war is heard again. (V. ii.) The old ladies sitting beside the stage now stand up to peep through the lattice at what is going on inside. It opens abruptly, which startles the ladies back to their original seats. Inside the stage, Macbeth stands intrepidly. He encourages himself:

> They have tied me to a stake, I cannot fly,
> But bear-like I must fight the course. What's he
> That was not born of woman? Such a one
> Am I to fear, or none. (V. vii. 1-4)

On his shoulders, head, and arms, the swirl of cherry petals begin to settle, and they are falling heavier and heavier, heightening the sense of reaching the climax of the hero's end. He kills Young Seyward under the storm of cherry blossoms. He falls down on the ground thickly covered with petals like snow.

Macduff enters. He holds the body of Young Seyward lying on the ground, shouting, "Let me find him, fortune,/ And more I beg not". (l. 23-24) Through the lattice, cherry blossoms are seen to swirl in the air lit by red lights. Soldiers are running across the stage one after another, slashing their enemies coming from the opposite side of the stage. When the lattice opens, Macbeth appears, coming down the slight slope of steps to the front stage, saying "Why should I play the Roman fool, and die/ On mine own sword?" (l. 31-32) And in a moment Macduff appears from the steps, coming down to the ground where Macbeth stands, taking a slow step as he did, giving him a challenge with his sword pointed straight at him.

The two soldiers are now fighting with each other in a thick red glow of sunlight. The lights are more like the colour of blood, which dyes the falling cherry petals also red. The "apocalyptic"[45] image that Ninagawa describes is now on the stage. The storm of blood-coloured cherry blossoms rages more and more violently, with the grave tone of background music gradually increasing in volume.

The moment Macbeth is slashed, the music suddenly stops and the red light turns into deep blue. There is a complete silence on stage apart from the unceasing motion of cherry petals falling on the ground. Macbeth falls down on stage, slowly and slowly curves his body like a fetus. The music, *Sanctus,* starts again. As he returns to his mother's womb, he dies.

The way of dying like a fetus is the director's original idea in his promptbook.[46] But the whole acting of Mikijiro Hira's Macbeth can be interpreted in the context of a psychological relationship between mother and child. It is referred to as a "Mother Complex Macbeth" in *The Asahi Evening Press*:

> ...Mikijiro Hira's Macbeth must have been brought up by such a furious-tempered mother. A fierce, strong-minded woman: his wife Lady Macbeth, presses him on.....[47]

The man who can never be against his mother, because of fear, cannot be independent from her. He always seeks for the tranquility of his mind in maternal affection, so that he returns to his mother's womb when he dies.

This "mother and child" psychological reading of the play can be also associated with that of Freud's analysis of a father and son relationship in *Macbeth*:

> If one surveys the whole play from the summit marked by these words of Macduff's ['He has no children!' (IV. iii. 216)], one sees that it is sown with references to the father-children relation. The murder of the kindly Duncan is little else than *parricide*; in Banquo's case, Macbeth kills the father while the son escapes him; and in Macduff's, he kills the children because the father has fled from him.[48]

In the last scene, in the centre of the stage, Malcolm takes a seat on the throne of armour, where Banquo's ghost had appeared in the banquet scene. Macduff enters with Macbeth's head. Malcolm holds it, trying to stab it with his sword, and stops with some hesitation. The ceremony of hailing Malcolm as king of Scotland solemnly takes place on the glaring carpet of fallen pink petals. There is no motion of flowers falling now, as they have done all through the production. It gives the impression that all turmoil has been completely settled as "*shizu-kokoronaku*"[49] falling cherry blossoms have been stopped.

In the middle of Malcolm's speech, the latticed door starts closing with a clattering noise and the music is heightened more and more to the maximum, which drowns out the most of his speech as if it was saying that his speech is of no importance any longer.[50]

The old ladies close the front doors of *butsudan*, which are black, fringed with gold, as they had opened them in the beginning. Two enormous candles are seen to be burning inside the latticed door from the half-closed doors of the front. Now the stage exactly looks

like a huge *butsudan* from the perspective of the audience: an enlarged model of it. The women crouch down to the altar, bowing their heads, praying with their hands together, and stand up feebly with heavy baskets on their backs, staggering down the steps of the stage, as they leave. The temple gongs ring solemnly, resonating long and loud.

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Finally, I would like to draw attention to the characteristic elements of this stage production and offer some further analysis.

First of all, the use of *kabuki*'s actors for the Three Witches is important. Through applying the traditional theatrical form to their acting and using its male actors for the female roles of the non-sexual beings of the Witches in the play, the weird image of the roles becomes strikingly strengthened. And also, the formalization of acting in *kabuki*, which is the opposite to the modern trend of realism, gives the idea especially to the western audience that they have "certain rigid conventions"[51] all through the production.

However, this kind of formalized acting seems to be partly the influence of *shingeki*[52] rather than borrowing the traditional form of *kabuki*, which has conventionalized the acting of all the types of western dramas translated into Japanese since it was first introduced as a new dramatic form in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Probably because the actors have to speak the translated language of western plays, which sometimes does not sound natural in Japanese, they are required to articulate each word, emphasize the intonation and express emotions in a more and more exaggerated fashion. This convention has settled down in Japanese *shingeki* style of theatre as a different type of theatre from the old tradition of *kabuki*. In Ninagawa's production, however, both new and old conventions coexist.

Secondly, the framework of *butsudan* stage. This is one of the most unique ideas for the production. Ninagawa is experimenting with methods to try to transfer the western rhetoric which runs through the play as a strong stream of Christian thinking into the religious equivalent in Japan. By putting the stage in the symbolic image of Japanese worship for ancestors, *butsudan*, he visually replaces the backbone of the play with that of Japanese culture.

Consequently, the drama which takes place in the altar becomes the story of the deceased for whom the audience recalls their memories with deep sympathetic prayers. It is successful not only in the sense that the procedure makes the western play close to the Japanese audience but that it presents 'a sense of time' passing through all our real life among the dead and the living, giving the transitory idea of this world.---As *The Times* says, "a present tense action takes on the pathos of time long passed".[53]

Thirdly, the use of cherry blossoms also gives the hint of "transciency" to the production from the literary background of Japanese literature as I have already mentioned. The falling of cherry blossoms itself, because of their short life, has been giving Japanese poets, since ancient time, the inspiration of time passing in this temporary world, and the image is more contemporarily interpreted by Ninagawa as 'bloody red colour of falling petals' indicating death. ("Under a cherry tree, a dead body is buried.")[54] Those blossoms are, at the same time, representing "the transience of earthly power"[55] as they are in the literature. The flower storm all through the production symbolizes the time limitation of the hero's sovereignty as the real time of the production goes by.

Fourthly, the three dimensional structure of the production by the use of inter-mediators: two old ladies standing beside the stage. They are between the actors and the audience, mediating those two different worlds through transferring their sympathy with the

characters in the play to the audience who lead 'an ordinary life'.[56] The structure of the stage also stands for this dimension: the door of the altar, the latticed door in the middle, and the inside space of the stage.

As in Ninagawa's other productions, he seems to try to attract the audience's attention by putting something, or somebody surprising between characters and audience as if he invited them to the world of the play by taking two or three dimensional steps from reality. His intention is, as *The Times* says, "not simply to shock the spectator into attention", but "to place a particular story in the context of eternity".[57] To keep the audience, who live in an ordinary time, away from reality means not to surprise them by spectacular stagings, but for him to make them face the time of "eternity", where they can completely absorb themselves into the world which does not exist in reality.

Akihiko Senda points out that the basic pattern of a director's stage structure which is used repeatedly in his productions shows "the illustration which reflects the original image of the world on him".[58] For Ninagawa, to present many dimensional layers or levels of the world, which are sometimes shown as steep steps from the bottom to the top of a stage, or gigantic frameworks which make 'the layers' from outside to far inside of a stage, is to "seize the whole world" by using "the eyes of crawling insects on earth and those of flying birds in the sky".[59] For him, directing means to try to catch the whole sight of the world both in universal time and space.

To conclude, I would like to comment on the unique interpretation of Macbeth as a 'mother-complex' child. Mikijiro Hira's Macbeth looks like a small child sometimes in the production. While he is listening to his wife, he seems afraid of her as if he was being scolded by his mother in Act I scene vii. And after he murders Duncan, he is scared at the sight of his hands, wiping one of his wife's hands, which are also bloody, with his own

mouth as if he was seeking for his mother's. In Act V scene iii, he is waiting for messengers, sitting alone on a small chair, hunching his back, bending forward and holding his legs, putting them on the chair, regretting like a child without a mother that his "way of life/Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf". (ll. 22-23) And most of all, at the end, he dies like a fetus, rounding his fists with wrists crooked inside, bending his knees, drawing them in slowly with his arms.

If Freud's interpretation of the play, which I have mentioned, is related to the production, Macbeth is an immature person who cannot become an adult and in his subconscious mind he is always 'parricidal'. He is an escapist who seeks to return to the place where he used to belong, to find shelter in the most comfortable, the most safe, the most peaceful place: his mother's womb. He laments and cries in every scene, calling for his mother. He sheds tears even in his 'tomorrow-speech', sympathizing with himself.

This rather sentimental and overemotional acting makes the production look unique to the western eye. Michael Billington says:

> . . . In his hands the play seems less an anatomy of evil than a lament for the waste and destructiveness of vaulting ambition; and through it all what Virgil called "the sense of tears in mortal things".[60]

As he points out, the production is full of tears. This represents some part of Japanese mentality very well, which can be seen in tearful stories in some *kabuki* plays. The audience always expect to cry, shedding tears in sympathy.

Chapter III

The Comparison between the Japanese productions and the Western

Geoffrey Reeves raises the question about how Kurosawa's *Macbeth* can be regarded as Shakespeare:

> Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* . . . is a great masterpiece, perhaps the only true masterpiece inspired by Shakespeare, but it cannot properly be considered Shakespeare because it doesn't use the text.[1]

However, though two other 'western' films of Orson Welles and Roman Polanski use Shakespeare's text, in terms of their cutting of words, shortening the text, and reordering scenes, they cannot be said to be precisely 'Shakespeare' in the same sense as theatrical productions, which are based on his original texts. Frances K. Barasch calls this processing work from literary texts to films "revisionist art"[2]: the character of film art itself is to replace language with visual images, or to "convey meaning without language".[3]

If it is considered that Shakespeare's language is not more important than how it is visualized and how effectively transmitted in a different medium, it will be interesting to compare those three films: one culturally translated into Japanese, and the others interpreted in their western background.

In the first part of this chapter, I will discuss the three films from the aspect of their ways of interpreting the play in some specific scenes, especially focusing on Kurosawa's cultural interpretation. In the second part, I will compare two stage productions of the play:

one is Ninagawa's *Macbeth*, which I described in Chapter II, and the other one is Trevor Nunn's production at the Other Place in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1976.

Although stage productions are a completely different media from films, it will be interesting to compare the Japanese cultural translation for the stage with one of the most highly acclaimed English productions as an equivalent to the comparison between Kurosawa's *Macbeth* and two other western films of the play.

[1] Kurosawa v. Welles and Polanski

There have been many critics trying to compare these three great films of *Macbeth*. But it is almost impossible to argue about them in the same linguistic context as Neil Sinyard unsuccessfully does when he compares Kurosawa and Polanski as follows:

> . . . Both films leave a lot to be desired in terms of the verbal poetry and the speaking of the blank verse. The subtitles of Kurosawa's film reduce famous Shakespearean utterances to banalities like 'What weather! I've never seen anything like it!' whilst Polanski trivialises the 'Is this a dagger' soliloquy through crude special effects. In both cases, the films compensate by vivid visual imagery which brings the atmosphere of the play to frightening, pulsating life.[4]

In Kurosawa's film, the words he mentions are spoken in Japanese. They are not directly translated from Shakespeare, but are slightly old-fashioned, refined, written Japanese. The language in his film sounds, to the Japanese viewer, like that of period plays or legendary stories, or old literature.[5]

Therefore, the lack of verbal poetry in the case of Polanski's film in his dagger scene must be considered as a different example from Kurosawa's 'language', and when it comes to the problem of language, the comparison between Kurosawa and the other western films becomes completely meaningless.

When those three films are compared, Kurosawa's is almost incomparably different from the others not only in the sense of language, but of its cultural background in. If it is still worthwhile to compare them even though, it must be from a thematic viewpoint exploring each director's interpretation and imaginative response to Shakespeare's play.

I will choose three points in each film: the Witches' scenes, opening and final scenes, and the scenes between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

(1) The Witches' scenes

In this section, I will consider the significance of the supernatural beings in each film and clarify how dominant they are, or how influential over the hero's fatal action.

a) *Mono-no-ke* in *Throne of Blood*

In Kurosawa's film, as I have already discussed in the first chapter, there is a very clear image of a character called *mono-no-ke*, which story is based on a Noh play *Kurozuka*. Shakespeare's three figures of the Weird Sisters are transformed into one old ogress, living in a remote forest, spinning thread in a weirdly slow motion. After she disappears into the mist, Washizu and Miki see the heaps of bodies, skeletons and rusty armours on the ground, which is the visualized image of *Kurozuka*'s story. Simply the spirit evokes a 'cultural' sense of fear to the Japanese viewer: the existence of an ogress in a remote forest, which is a familiar image in old legendary stories; the slow motion of her spinning a wheel, which is so weirdly slow that it reminds one of its symbol of metempsychosis' circulation in life; and the showing of dead bodies which are supposed to be the past sacrifices of travellers, killed and cannibalized by her.

This gives the whole film the chilling atmosphere of a ghost story. As Jack Jorgens says, "*Throne of Blood* echoes with the Forest Spirit's dark laughter",[6] the existence of the evil spirit is very influential over the film to the viewer.

After a long deluded way coming through the forest, her prophecies to Washizu and Miki become true in front of their lord with his people. When they receive swords from the lord ceremoniously, their distorted faces with surprise and ambition are memorable to the viewer. They show their obsession with the spirit clearly. And also, in the scene where Miki and his son Yoshiteru argue about Washizu's offer of adopting Yoshiteru as an heir, on the open corridor in their castle, Yoshiteru refers to the prophecy of the spirit in an interesting way:

> Yoshiteru: Such an expectation itself shows that you are bewitched. Bewitched by an evil spirit, you built up the events as she told you, with your own hands, and then you believe in the fulfilment of her prophesy. . . I doubt your sanity. (p. 252)

According to him, his father Miki is obsessed with the spirit or "bewitched" by her, and his "sanity" is doubted. In contrast, Shakespeare's Banquo seems to have more psychological distance from the Witches' prophecies than Miki, but here, Yoshiteru's perception of Miki's thoughts shows the powerful influence of the spirit over the two major characters.

In the play, Banquo dreams "of the three Weird Sisters" (II. i. 21) and speaks of his hope that he himself "should be the root and father/ Of many kings". (III. i. 5-6) But he never takes action for himself whereas Miki more positively shows his ambition in the way that he is always ready for the chance. He rebukes bitterly his son who rejects Washizu's offer of his adoption:

> Listen! You are to have the castle for your own, without shedding blood and strewing the ground with corpses. In this world you can never be more fortunate. I question your own sanity in refusing such a proposal! (p. 252)

In Washizu's case, however, the influence of the spirit shows more in his wife Asaji than himself. The spirit seems to have possessed her completely in her manner, thoughts and attitudes. When she moves or speaks, she looks like a supernatural figure. (Especially in the scene where she disappears like a ghost into darkness with the eerie rustling of clothes to get a bottle of poisoned *sake* for the guards.) She does not even need to strengthen her weakness as a human being by calling upon spirits as Lady Macbeth does in Act V scene i. She seems to have a supernatural power from the beginning, which can be seen by her strange appearance of a white face (modelled after a Noh mask) which resembles strikingly that of the spirit in the forest.

She may be a type of wife who figures as the incarnation of an animal like a fox, a crane, or a snake in Japanese folk tales, alluring her husband in her unnatural manner. In this way, the supernatural atmosphere pervades the film quite dominantly. But it must be remembered that this is not shown as supernatural spirits against human beings or evil against good, but in a more ambiguously mixed way like a misty forest drawn with black and white *sumi*-painting technique, which blurs light and shadow as in a watercolour.

b) Orson Welles's Witches

In contrast to Kurosawa's film, in Welles' *Macbeth*, the evil existence of witches is more clearly described against the order of human society. As Jorgens says:

> . . . Welles's film shows a world permeated from the beginning with evil. Christian values, symbolized by the Celtic cross, constitute a fragile, man-made order which is helpless before the natural forces of chaos embodied in gnarled trees, swirling fog, and the Witches.[7]

There is a world which is supposed to be in order, not in chaos, under the complete control of "Christian values", so that which violates the order of the society is thought to be evil.

This is the premise in both his film and the play. Therefore, the role of the Witches in his film always stands against good and order.

After a streaming cloud of heaven or a smoky mist of hell is shown, a view, with a crooked branch of a tree like the claws of a hawk on the left and a projected cliff on the right, is revealed on the screen. On the cliff, there are three uncanny figures with similar appearance, working on something around a cauldron, murmuring, "Double, double, toil and trouble . . . ". (IV. i. 10)

From boiling muddy liquid, burning fire and splashing water, they pull out something solid, which is the size of a newborn baby. They knead and shape it into a clay doll. In the process of it, it makes a strange squeaky noise like a little pig as it feels great pain in every squeeze and every wrench they make. When the doll is completed, they say in chorus, "There to meet with Macbeth". (I. i. 7)

Two horses enter the screen, galloping in a mist, with two riders on their backs. On the cliff, which has been already shown, the three figures are still moving, murmuring, "A drum, a drum:/ Macbeth doth come". (I. iii. 31) Thunder never seems to stop.

While hanging a pendant round the neck of the clay doll, and later putting a crown on its head, they screech to Macbeth, "Hail. Hail. Hail." And when they say the same to Banquo, they look back to the camera, showing three similarly shaped forms, with long white hair and without faces hidden in a black shadow.

They disappear into smoke to the sound of Scottish bagpipe music being heard from far away, but again appear after the people, including a priest (a created character by Welles) and a traitor, the Thane of Cawdor dragged between two horses as a criminal, have gone. They slowly show their shadowed faces from a rock. As if they were seeing off those people from the high cliff, they scream again, "Hail!", raising up three Y-shape sticks

to the sky in thunder. The Y-shape sticks and the clay doll become two symbolic signs of their power from now on.

In the dagger scene of Act II scene i, Macbeth sees a flash of a dagger with the hallucination of the clay doll, and before the banquet scene, they appear with those sticks and put a crown on the bleeding head of the doll. And also, when Macbeth is beheaded in his end, the doll's head is seen to be cut off as well, which flies away in the air like a ball. And in the end, the Y-shape sticks are again shown, being held by the three faceless Witches.

As Frances K. Barasch points out that "the opening visuals coincide with Welles' simplified theme of good versus evil",[8] as in "the Celtic Cross versus the forked staves",[9] it is very clear that Welles shows these two contrasts as thematic symbols: the Y-sticks for evil and the Celtic Cross for good.

After the victory of Macduff's soldiers, hundreds of the Celtic crosses are impressively seen to be raised with the shouts of the excited people. Although good seems to have won against evil, after a second of the shot, three staves of chaos show with the Witches, who are saying that "Peace, the charm's wound up". (I. iii. 37)

Evil is stronger than good in Welles's film. And the clay image reminds the viewer that the power of evil is always dominant over him, controlling his fate from the beginning till the end. Joseph McBride says:

> If the witches are to Shakespeare's Macbeth only a catalyst to his ambition, to Welles they are the very agents of Macbeth's destruction, the forces which have formed him and which he has not found the strength to surmount.[10]

On the other hand, though the Witches have a strong controlling power in the film, it is also true that they do not give as strong an impact on the viewer in terms of a sense of fear as

Kurosawa gives. James Naremore refers to them as "a Wellesian spook show",[11] and in some ways Welles's Macbeth seems to be teased by those comical figures rather than be trapped by serious fateful force.

c) Polanski's Witches

In terms of horror, or grotesqueness, Polanski's Witches can be said to be supreme.

The first time they are seen is in the opening scene. On the seashore, the day is about to dawn. We see the colour of the sky gradually changing into blue, purple, red, orange, pink, and white over the horizon. Suddenly, the viewpoint is switched from far to near by one crooked stick, which enters the screen diagonally, in a trembling movement. It draws a circle on the sand, where three women with ragged clothes dumbly begin to dig. One of them buries a rope, which seems to be used for hanging, and another one, a blond girl, takes a severed hand out of an old cloth bag, putting it into the centre of the noose. The other woman, who has no eyes, makes it grip a dagger and they all three pile in sand to cover the hole. Pouring blood from a vial, they begin, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair, . . . ". (I. i. 11) The fog obscures their figures as they move silently toward the horizon. A chaotic sound and the squeal of seagulls echoes.

The second time the viewer sees them is in front of a cave, where Macbeth and Banquo appear on horseback in a heavy rain. Rocky hills as in the Highlands of Scotland are seen. Looking down from a hill in a slow, tired procession after the war dragging a cargo of dead bodies, Macbeth murmurs, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen". (I. iii. 38) Then, a song, sung in a feeble, hoarse, old woman's voice, a sheer discomfort to the ear, is heard from somewhere. The singer coughs badly in the middle of the song, but tries to continue the tune of disharmony. Macbeth and Banquo see there in front of the cave of

rocks an old blind woman with a black hood massaging a blond girl's naked back. A third woman with a white hood, who is actually thought to have been singing outside the screen, goes away with a milk bucket in her hand, leading a goat, while the blond girl takes the blind woman's hand, leading the way to the cave after their prophecies. Not "into the air", but into the cave they go down steps. The blond girl, before she leaves, lifts up her ragged skirt she is wearing and mocks them, saying, "boo", sticking out her tongue. The sound of a closing door is heard. The rain stops. They are left stunned.

In the scene of a cauldron, which is the third appearance of them, they become even more grotesque than the Witches in the other two films. Under the dark blue sky just before dawn, Macbeth in a light blue mantle, riding on a white horse, visits their cave again. The theme of the Witches---the tune of disharmony is heard in background music with the sound effects of an owl and a cricket.

The cave emits uncanny smoke. A woman's white hand reaches and grabs Macbeth's right hand, pulling him into the smoky cave. Inside the cave, the viewer sees a shocking sight of the grotesque naked bodies of numerous ugly women, who surround a boiling cauldron, putting all sorts of abominable ingredients as in the play, "Fillet of a fenny snake" or "toe of frog" (IV. i. 12. 14.), into it, stirring and murmuring in chorus.

They all look repulsively ugly: one has dishevelled hair of white and listless blond colour, one has an extremely fat and flabby body, and one has red spotty scars everywhere on her face. One of them takes a golden chalice out of a cloth bag and pours into it the brew of the muddy colour bubbling and smoking inside the cauldron, and some liquid, which looks like blood from a small bottle. She passes it to Macbeth. He empties it at a gulp. It reminds the viewer of a Christian ritual, more precisely, Catholic ritualism, which represents the action of drinking the blood of Christ from a chalice as the unification with

Christ.[12] Macbeth, who has finished the drink, staggers along to the cauldron, supported by some of the witches. He looks down into it, where he sees his own head speaking, "beware Macduff" (IV. i. 85), and it is decapitated soon afterwards.

In the next hallucination in the cauldron, he sees fumbling arms in the pool of blood, out of which a newborn baby rises. An old midwife grins, holding the baby in her arms. A little boy appears and gives him the second prophecy, "none of woman born/ Shall harm Macbeth". (IV. i. 94-95) An armoured soldier appears. Macbeth, who is watching the apparition from outside the cauldron, brandishes his sword, and cuts off the soldier's head. The helmet falls to the ground, and then the whole body collapses like a marionette. Macbeth's decapitated head is revealed.

The scene changes into a natural landscape. The collapsed armour is left on the grass. A snake comes through the hole of the helmet. The two sons of Duncan in white clothes applaud and laugh beside it. They run away, leaving the third prophecy of Birnam Wood.

The camera moves through a bush where the two princes have gone. The viewer sees kings on thrones appear one after another. All of them hold mirrors and turn them to the viewer. (Here, the viewer equals Macbeth himself.) In the end, Banquo appears with an axe in his back, bleeding from his mouth and body, smiling at Macbeth, stretching his arms as in the play, "For the blood-boltered Banquo smiles upon me,/ And points at them for his". (IV. i. 139-40) Macbeth bursts out shouting. A mirror is shattered by his shout, and in the next moment everything falls into silence.

Macbeth wakes up with the drops of rain falling from a roof onto his face. It is morning. No hallucinations or witches can be seen any more. All the things that he heard

and saw are like the bad dream of a previous night. Also for the viewer, it is a very long succession of nightmarish sights, which never seems to finish.

In contrast to Kurosawa's reduction of the number of witches from three to one, Polanski increases their number. And while Kurosawa simplifies the role of the evil being: possessing someone like a ghost, Polanski complicates the symbol of the Witches.

As Jack Jorgens points out "the severed hand" they bury in the opening scene foreshadows "many links between sex and violence", and the "noose buried in the sand suggests Macbeth has affinities with both the other traitor Cawdor and that archetypal figure T. S. Eliot called 'the hanging man'".[13] The Witches in Polanski's *Macbeth* give the viewer many symbolical resonances in a modern sense. Moreover, unlike Welles's 'standardized' witches, Polanski's are individualized characters with one young blonde witch, one blind, and one old.[14]

Thus, the descriptions of supernatural beings are so detailed in Polanski's version. At the end of the film, when Donalbain runs to the Witches, their power seems extremely dominant. Such an ending gives no hope that good will survive in this chaotic world.

(2) The thematic consistency in openings and conclusions

I decided to focus especially upon the openings and conclusions in discussing these films because they seem to encapsulate the directors' interpretations of the play or the main themes of their films. Coincidentally or not, both Orson Welles's and Polanski's *Macbeth* begin with the Witches as in the original, and also end with the symbolical implication of their power.

In Kurosawa's film, the opening and ending are his own invention, which gives the unique thematic character to the film.

a) The circular structure in Kurosawa's opening and ending

As I have argued in Chapter I, Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* has its own thematic coherence in the Buddhistic lesson presented in the opening and ending. The chorus sings that the treacherous ambition of men ("*shu-shin*" in the original scenario, which means disorderly attachments to something) leads them into ruin and things never change even now and then.

It is deplored that the evil in human beings has made them repeat the same acts since ancient times, and in the monument of "*Kumonosu-jo Ato*" (The Site of Cobweb Castle), which is shown both in the opening and the ending, it is represented that all human beings must pass this world no matter how they may prosper in their lives.

As regards to the structure of the film, in the sense of going back to the same vision as the first shot, it has a circular formation, which reminds the viewer of the Noh tradition or its fundamental idea of metempsychosis.

It seems that Kurosawa's opening and ending are merely his cultural augmentation to the play if it is considered that they are not in Shakespeare's original. However, Kurosawa's interpretation of the play seen through these two scenes is deeply connected with the essence of *Macbeth* and even enhances the dramatic effect which the play, or any productions of it, give the reader or the audience.

What I mean here by "the essence of *Macbeth*" is something related to the 'tomorrow' speech. The on-going image of the speech, the insignificant continuation of days in human history, gives the reader the same impression that Kurosawa's *Macbeth* does

to the viewer. E. Pearlman analyzes the ending of the film in a broader sense: from the death of Washizu up to the chorus. While he points out that "the chorus distances the events of *Throne of Blood* by placing them somewhere in an unspecified past", which makes Washizu "the type of the ambitious man",[15] he regards its 'ending' as "equivocal".[16] According to him, the death of Washizu can be both optimistic and pessimistic:

> . . . Insofar as the assassination of Washizu can be regarded as a political act, it offers some cause for optimism; to the extent that the assassination simply expresses the opportunism of the soldiers, it is dreadfully pessimistic.[17]

In Kurosawa's *Macbeth*, there exists no legal political order even before and during Washizu's reign, so that the death of Washizu does not mean the recovery of peace, or the restoration of legitimate monarchy as in the ending of the play. As Pearlman says:

> . . . Unlike Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which invests monarchy with the potential for justice and morality, *Throne of Blood* does not contain the seeds of a healthy polity within its ruling elite.[18]

Kurosawa, however, never gives political optimism by the death of Washizu or any moralistic hope for human beings through showing the monument of Cobweb Castle, with the chorus of despair. It is sheer pessimism that Kurosawa tries to transfer to the viewer rather than the social optimism for a tyrant's death, and he emphasizes pity for the death of a man rather than a fear of the moralistic warning to human society.

The spirit, the existence of a supernatural power, is dominantly described in the film, but in *Throne of Blood*, what the viewer perceives in the end is not the hopeless dominance of evil as in the other two. The evil power is strong, but the director very well knows that evil being cannot be the main character of the play. When Washizu falls to the ground, the silence that spreads through the throng of soldiers renders the solemn dignity of the death of a man. The hero of the film is not an evil being who controls a man, but

Washizu, a man, who destroys himself under the power of the *mono-no-ke* spirit. In addition, what Kurosawa describes is not the only individual but the whole circulation of human beings from birth to death, generation after generation.

The recurrence of the opening in the ending, is not merely an attempt to make the story a parable, but a procedure to show the viewer the entire system of the universe, including good and evil, human beings and supernatural beings, and those who have already left the world and who are soon going to leave.

b) The circulation of evil in Polanski's opening and ending

Polanski's *Macbeth* has also a circular structure in the sense that its ending implies that something is going to start again. The film starts with the scene showing the three Witches burying objects on a seashore. It is not like Shakespeare's first scene, with thunder and lightning in a storm, while, in Polanski's film, seagulls are screeching in the sky in the quiet of the morning.

It starts with the Witches as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* does, but also ends with the Witches unlike the play. Evil, in here, is more centred than in Shakespeare's play and the film presents a more hopeless image of the world than the play does.

At the end of the film, after the viewer sees the decapitated head of Macbeth raised up, on a pole, laughed at mockingly by soldiers, another scene starts with the thematic song of the Witches and the sight of their rocky cave on a mountainside.

There is no dignity or pity in the death of Macbeth as Kurosawa shows, and no peace or hope as Shakespeare shows in the recovery of legitimate reign, when Ross, who is depicted in the film as a black-hearted agent of Macbeth, raises up a crown with the cry of soldiers, "Hail, King of Scotland". (V. vii. 89)

And it is just after the scene that the viewer sees the cave of the Witches again in the rain. A man on horseback is going toward the cave. When he takes off his blue hood, he shows his face, but if the viewer is not careful, the face is not easily identified until he gets off the horse and starts walking with a limp. It is Donalbain. His limping walk shows impressively in the scene after the murder of Duncan when Malcolm and he decide to flee from Scotland. The song of the Witches is heard. The limping man walks toward the cave from which is billowing the same white smoke as Macbeth had seen from the cauldron in an earlier scene. Malcolm, his brother, has become King of Scotland. Now he is meeting the Witches to find out his way to the throne. In the heavy rain from the dark grey sky, a horse is waiting alone for its rider.

It represents the complete barrenness of the world. Ambition and evil continue from generation to generation and there is no way to get out of this circulation. It shows no dignity of human existence. No deliverance of human souls. Kenneth S. Rothwell concludes his article:

> . . . Polanski's *Macbeth*, unlike Shakespeare's, deprives us of a sense of pity and awe. Evil has not been purged; Easter Sunday seems light years away; and we are left standing in the bitter dust of the place of agony and sacrifice, a Golgotha in technicolor.[19]

Thus, Polanski's *Macbeth* never gives catharsis to the viewer, only leaves an aftertaste of depression and desperation. As a tragedy, therefore, in terms of cathartic satisfaction, it cannot be said that the film is a successful reproduction of one of the greatest Shakespeare's tragedies.

Nevertheless, there is another kind of viewpoint if the viewer regards the film as Polanski's original rather than Shakespeare's. For Virginia Wright Wexman, this hopeless cycle is referred to as Polanski's response to two trends of modernism: Absurdism and Sur-

realism.[20] According to her, by those two modern trends, he shows in many of his films "a world where events occur in never-ending cycles that force the protagonists into positions of infantile powerlessness".[21] The circular plot patterns in Polanski's are, therefore, more related to the modern trends of art than the thematic identification with Shakespeare.

While Kurosawa expands the essence of the play to the cultural and religious interpretation of his own background, Polanski abstracts the play into his artistic expression of the modern world, where no 'cathartic' tragedy exists. Whether it is Absurdism or Surrealism, however, it is also true that the film gives some repulsive impression to the viewer, which is nothing to do with 'art'. Jack Jorgens says:

> . . . Rather it is an instinctive feeling of disgust and horror at seeing the human body dismembered, pierced, and contorted, . . .[22]

The shocking sights of those scenes are the director's creation, which are sometimes overdone. This keeps the viewer away from Shakespeare's tragic viewpoint of the play, and makes the film "more melodrama than tragedy".[23]

c) Welles's opening and ending

The thematic structure of Welles's *Macbeth* is more simplified than the other two. In the opening scene, the three Witches show their controlling power by making a clay doll, and in the ending they appear again to declare their victory by saying that their "charm's wound up".

Anthony Davies says:

> Shakespeare's *Macbeth* derives much of its dramatic tension from the choices and decisions made by the individual character within the framework of a medieval Christian universe. Welles's film inevitably reduces this dramatic intensity by limiting Macbeth's options, and by giving the witches a manipulative ascendancy, their power over Macbeth being visually established early in the film when they are depicted with a small crowned effigy at their feet.[24]

The ending of the film makes its theme incomplete.

When the head of Macbeth is cut off by the sword of a soldier, that of the doll is also decapitated. And the doll's head is seen flying away just like a small ball. It shows that the manipulation of the Witches has been completed at the end of Macbeth and all his fate has been completely under the command of them.

Hundreds of Celtic crosses are raised with the victorious shouts of people. A Christian order of goodness seems to have been restored, and this shot also seems to be the end of the film. However, the viewer sees another ending of the story in a mist, where the shape of a castle appears and, at the foot of a hill, three figures with Y-shape sticks also appear. Their faceless heads move into close up, saying, "Peace, the charm's wound up".

This is the victory of evil. Macbeth does not have any power to fight against it. He is only manipulated and controlled as a doll. All his struggles are in vain. There is a created character called the Holy Father in the film. He is a symbol of the Christian society being described as a counterpart to the evil existence. But the victory of evil in the ending shows that his power of Christian background is completely useless and he is also powerless in the society.

In this way, the structure of evil in Welles's *Macbeth* is rather simplistic as compared with the other two. Polanski's *Macbeth* presents a more complicated balance of evil in human psychology and external nature, and Kurosawa's stresses the human side of the story about a man living in a society of evil, fighting against the nature of evil beings.

The ending of Welles's *Macbeth*, moreover, not only makes the structure of the film simplistic, but thematically inconsistent according to Frances K. Barasch. She says:

> The final view of the Sisters, however, creates a disturbance in the conception (symptomatic of other contradictions in Welles' work) because it implies that, although Macbeth is dead, evil lives on. This thematic ambigui-

> ty is nowhere suggested in the prologue narration or the body of the work. Thematic consistency is sacrificed for art in Welles' film.[25]

Because of the additional ending of the Witches' statement of their ongoing existence, Welles's *Macbeth* becomes more like a story of evil spirits than that of man's struggles, whereas Polanski shows Donalbain's dark ambition working with the power of evil beings.

In all three films, the pessimistic or dark side of the story is emphasized respectively by three original endings, but in Welles's *Macbeth* the emphasis on the human drama is the weakest of all.

(3) The interpretation of the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

In this third part of the comparison of the three films, I would like to consider the characterization of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, in which the three films each represent an individual interpretation. Through this, I will clarify which film gives the most effective impact on the viewer as the original play gives it on the reader.

a) Kurosawa's orthodox interpretation of Macbeth and his lady

As A. C. Bradley says;

> . . . The reader who looks unwillingly at Iago gazes at Lady Macbeth in awe, because though she is dreadful she is also sublime. The whole tragedy is sublime.[26]

The tragedy must be "sublime". This important critic understands Lady Macbeth as "dreadful" but "sublime", and the reader (or the viewer, or the audience) looks at her "in awe".

Asaji in *Throne of Blood* has certainly this type of character, who strongly evokes awe. She shows a mystical aura in every step she takes and every motion she makes. She seems to be the incarnation of *Mono-no-ke*, a forest spirit. She has a strong power against her husband Washizu, who is indecisive, intimidated and full of hesitation about taking the action for murdering his lord.

She always speaks in a low voice, acting with complete confidence, which makes her look dominant and persuasive. She is the authentic type of Lady Macbeth, which gives the "sublime" impression on the audience as well as a sense of fear; as it were, a Sarah Siddons' type of Lady Macbeth.

The director Kurosawa refers to his interpretation of the character of Macbeth as "not talented enough for"[27] a king, a "naive"[28] soldier. (This corresponds to the interpretation of Caroline Spurgeon: the image of "a loose and badly fitting garment")[29] The weak image of Washizu is contrasted with the tough and strong image of Asaji, who is not only strong-minded but also shows the supernatural strength beyond the power of human beings. And this mystical aura is elaborately represented by the acting of Isuzu Yamada.

The relationship between Washizu and Asaji deteriorates as it does in the play, after the murder of their lord Tsuzuki. And the change of the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth must be shown with the strong intensity of their first murder scene, in which most productions are unsuccessful. In *Throne of Blood*, the intensity of the scene is perfectly designed.

There are two effects used in the scene: the effect of sound and the other one is motion. The sound effect contains two types: natural sound; such as the sound made by the clothes they wear. The sound is especially called *kinuzure* in Japanese. When they move, their *kimono* makes a fricative noise. And secondly, instrumental sound; flute and drum

used in Noh music called *gagaku*. Those two types of sound are combined together and heighten the tension of the scene very effectively.

Moreover, the motion they make, especially in Asaji's choreographic movement while Washizu is off screen murdering Tsuzuki, reminds the viewer of the formalized style of Noh acting. This ritualistic movement symbolizes Asaji's internal distraction, attracting the viewer's eyes of curiosity so well.

Their first collaboration of committing murder is well described in the play with the strong power of tension. While Lady Macbeth screams with fear, hearing the cry of an owl, Macbeth shouts because of the noise from the next room. (II. ii. 9-17) The scene shows their fear and tension. They take an important action for the first time, which divides their later life.

In that, the tension shown by using the effect of Japanese tradition in the film has a great meaning in echoing the original play. Lady Asaji, who still has the initiative at this time, dances in an ecstasy, which corresponds to the cry of fear of Lady Macbeth in the play. Washizu, who has already lost himself, enters with a bloody spear, taking grave steps in a formalized style. He does not say anything, but it shows how he is shocked and how isolated he becomes from his wife, occupied with his own thought. The film shows complete pattern of the original scene using the most effective cinematic devices.

The relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth will deteriorate after this scene, so the scene must evoke some kind of intense impression on the viewer as a turning point in the first part of the play. And Kurosawa successfully gives the scene this intensity.

Asaji and Washizu in *Throne of Blood* are, though they are completely culturally reformed, the orthodox type of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, strictly based on the original play. Asaji has an overwhelming power over Washizu at the beginning as Lady Macbeth

does, and their relationship follows the fall of the Macbeths just as the story goes scene by scene in the play.

b) Polanski's beautiful couple of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

In contrast to Kurosawa's, couple Polanski's Macbeth and Lady Macbeth do not seem to be based on their original image of the play. It can be said particularly about Lady Macbeth played by Francesca Annis, who is a fair lady as Normand Berlin says, "Polanski does not take seriously the words that Shakespeare gives to Lady Macbeth---'unsex me here'".[30]

Macbeth himself is young and handsome, appropriately matched with his beautiful and attractive wife. He always looks rather calm, not showing his internal struggles on his face, though his soliloquies are presented as voice-over as if he is thinking to himself. He looks neither brave nor cowardly, but like an immature young man, who commits a serious crime without any strong motivation or any sense of morality. His characterization has a weak impact on the film as a tragedy, where protagonists struggle with their strong ego and moral sensitivity. H. R. Coursen points out that "Jon Finch's Macbeth is never a man struggling with his innate virtue against the thrust of his will".[31]

On the other hand, there are some interesting points found in the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Polanski's. There is a symbolical meaning in the physical beauty of the couple when the key phrase of the Witches is remembered: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair". Their beauty is contrasted with the ugliness of the Witches while their action of murder is "foul" against the 'fairness' of their figures.

Polanski and Kenneth Tynan, literary adviser to the National Theatre and collaborator of the film, intend "to emphasise a conflict between age and usurping youth

that would make the film of interest to a young audience",[32] so that they "were convinced that if young, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth would be more sympathetic characters",[33] according to Barbara Leaming's biography of Polanski.

One of the most intriguing scenes in showing their relationship is Lady Macbeth's persuasion of her husband, I vii. The beautiful young lady in a draping light blue dress sheds tears, begging, rather than nagging, her husband. Her words repeating his question "If we should fail?" (l. 59) sound rather sad about her husband's timidity, which she sees as preventing her wish from coming true. Shedding crystal tears from innocent-looking eyes, she quietly says, "We fail?".

Polanski says, "How could any man be influenced by a nag?"[34]---When he first met twenty-five-year-old Francesca Annis for the casting interview, the way she read lines was "like a little girl",[35] and the director regarded highly this childlike quality of the actress as the way to manipulate her husband.[36]

The Lady Macbeth Polanski intended to create is not a strong lady as in the play. A powerful, nagging woman, who is sometimes overwhelmingly obsessed with a supernatural power is not the type of Lady he was going to present. The lady he presents is weak, fragile, emotional, and feminine, which makes her later illness more understandable.[37]

However, when Lady Macbeth is interpreted in that way, the persuasion of her husband becomes more like his yielding to her feminine attraction rather than to her mystical aura given by the spirits she calls to 'unsex' her and fill her full of 'direst cruelty'.

According to Leaming, Polanski "was intent on developing the 'sexual thing between the Macbeths'".[38] Their sexual closeness is shown in their first meeting after Macbeth comes home after the war. They kiss each other on a bed while Lady Macbeth touches his cheeks softly with her hands. Or, their physical separation is seen contrastively

in Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking scene, where she is completely naked, sleeping all alone in a double bed.

Their youth is described as the symbol of beauty and sex, which shows their mental immaturity to take the wrong step toward the throne. Moreover, such an interpretation fails to convince many. H. R. Coursen simply says, "No depth. No language. No characterization. No mystery. No tragedy."[39]

c) Orson Welles's Macbeth and his lady

Welles's Lady Macbeth is played by Jeanette Nolan, a radio actress, who appears for the first time in his film. As Roger Manvell points out, her acting is unremarkable:

> . . . she acted no more than competently, and brought little personality to the part. She utterly failed to match Welles's brooding majesty, his Titan rages, his paralysed fear and superstition, his haunted melancholy.[40]

Although she is not a counterpart to Welles's Macbeth, his direction of the couple makes the film unique to some extent.

As in Polanski's film, the sexual element of their relationship is emphasized but in an even more violent way. They embrace each other in front of the hanged body of executed Cawdor, and before they meet, Lady Macbeth waits for her husband's return, lying down on a fur covered bed, touching the fur desirously. Even in her sleep-walking scene, where, in the play, their mental as well as physical separation is obvious, Macbeth embraces her not like Polanski's Lady Macbeth, who sleeps alone in her bed.

Their sexual closeness, however, does not show any new insight into the interpretation of the play. There is only an added hint of interest that Lady Macbeth, who looks like a lusty woman, might have seduced Duncan in her fur bed before he is murdered. The viewer sees him asleep in the same bed as she lies on in an earlier scene.[41]

While Roger Manvell praises some aspects of the film, he comments critically on Welles's acting: "Welles lacked any real mastery of Shakespearean speech",[42] Welles's Macbeth does not give us so much grandeur, not more than the image of "a mini-King Kong"[43] dressed with bearlike fur.

The film shows the prehistoric time of the world, where human beings are more savage, barbarous, and close to nature. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth also live in that kind of barbaric society, so that their internal struggles expressed by Shakespeare's lines sound more superficial than the chaos of their outside world.

It may be considered that the weak impression given to the viewer on their psychological aspect comes from the shortened version of the story as well as the poor acting of the characters. Welles cuts many lines, rearranging many words and scenes freely, overlapping two scenes in one shot, and so on. This makes the viewer feel bustled all through the film, not given enough time to look into the characters' inner self.

The impact from the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Welles's film is not very strong, compare to Kurosawa's orthodox type of the couple and the young and beautiful couple of Polanski's.

It is Orson Welles's *Macbeth*, but not his lady's. As the director himself mentions, "Theatre is a collective experience: cinema is the work of one single person---the director",[44] he dominates all the film by his superior acting to Lady Macbeth and all the other characters.

* * * * *

I have discussed the three films of *Macbeth* by Kurosawa, Polanski, and Welles through analyzing three points in each film. Kurosawa's film is sharply different from the

other two in the sense that it does not use Shakespeare's text at all except the extracts of the meaning that the story conveys and it is put into a totally different cultural background, which changes the political framework of the original play completely.

As far as the play is concerned, it is a tragedy, not melodrama, which has a great tension running through to the end, and the recreated versions of the play must show the tension most effectively. In that sense, though Kurosawa's *Macbeth* is far from Shakespeare's text itself, it shows the tragic ongoing sense of suspense far better than the other two.

It is superior at every point to the others: the effective use of the supernatural existence, which gives the story mystical grandeur beyond human comprehension; the theme of the successive image of human history, which is closely related to the play; and the elaborate characterization of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth (Washizu and Asaji).

The Japanese tradition of theatre and art enhances the tension of the play, mixing well the representatives of the culture of the East and the West.

[2] Ninagawa v. Trevor Nunn

Trevor Nunn's 1976 production of *Macbeth* by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Other Place in Stratford-upon-Avon is greatly applauded by the audience and critics because of "a performance of extraordinary intensity by Ian McKellen"[45] and the "plain, quiet, austere"[46] atmosphere of the bare studio theatre.

The intensity that the audience perceived in such a dense, small space cannot be easily imagined by those who did not go to the theatre to see the performance. Even the

televised version of the production does not precisely give the viewer the sense of tension that the audience received at the theatre.

First of all, there is a big difference between Nunn's *Macbeth* and Ninagawa's in the scale of the stage they directed for. Ninagawa's spectacular staging, including the huge set of a Buddhist altar standing on the stage, strongly contrasts with Trevor Nunn's empty space.

Moreover, in Ninagawa's production, extending the cultural adaptation is emphasized rather than reading the text directly.

For all the extreme differences between them, they received almost constant and universal acclaim. They both produced a unique and memorable stage experience, which made their audiences feel that they had never seen *Macbeth* before.

In this section, I would like to compare Ninagawa's representative Japanese staging of *Macbeth* with Trevor Nunn's English production by considering the differences and even the similarities characterizing those two productions.

(1) Differences

a) The difference of language

Unlike the textual adaptation of films, most theatrical productions of Shakespeare in recent years are faithful to the original text. But in the cultural adaptation of foreign productions like Ninagawa, Shakespeare's plays are produced in translation.

In this, the English sound and rhythm of Shakespeare's language has to be ignored when audience see a foreign production or critics argue about it.

As far as Ninagawa's *Macbeth* is concerned, it uses the Japanese translation by Yushi Odashima with only the slight change of a few English place names and the translator's original use of Japanese words.[47]

However, without Shakespeare's language, what the audience can see is almost the 'story' of Shakespeare (how productions impressively show it on the stage) or the interpretation (how directors understand the play in their own way).

If Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* presents the audience with the poetical attraction of Shakespeare by a brilliant performance of Ian McKellen and Judi Dench, Ninagawa tries to show the tragic intensity of the drama by all sorts of visual attractiveness without his language.

Not only Shakespeare's language, but also the concept of his play Ninagawa transfers from the original text into the Japanese cultural background. While Nunn's *Macbeth* is one of the most successful productions in England considered to be the one which elaborately shows the original power and tension of the play, Ninagawa's is one of the most unique productions, judged to be successful in interpreting Shakespeare without his text and his cultural background.

In this sense, Nunn's production as a representative of 'authentic' English productions will be a measure for evaluating the foreign production, working from the premise that the Japanese *Macbeth* is a successful production even without Shakespeare's language.

b) The cultural difference of East and West

The second thing that is obviously different in these productions is, needless to say, the cultural setting. Experimentally, more or less, Ninagawa tries to transfer the whole

religious concept of the play, what he calls, "the rhetoric of Shakespeare".[48] So he erects the huge set of a Buddhist altar beside the stage and makes the story "the one told by the dead"[49] of our ancestors. This gives the production a hint of exoticism, underlining the oriental mental backbone as the western counterpart of Christianity.

In Nunn's production, interestingly, the emphasis on Christianity is quite clear. Duncan, who wears a white robe, is described almost as a saint, or a Catholic priest giving a Mass to people. His shining white costume even reminds the audience of the Transfiguration of Christ, contrasting shiningly against the black costumes of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Here, the most notable difference is the concept about good and evil. The Christian understanding of good and evil is always contrastive. In Nunn's production, good is represented by a holy spiritual type of King and evil by an ambitious soldier Macbeth, tempted by a devil. But in Ninagawa's, the Buddhist altar is the place for the sleeping dead, and Macbeth is also one of them, as weak, sinful as all the others. There is no clear distinction between good and evil, and no judgemental justice against the hero. The whole world holds both of them as it gently holds the chaos in its nature.

c) The difference of colours

The impact which a colour gives to people's eyes is relatively strong. One of the major attractions in Ninagawa's production is the amazing use of colours for the darkest story of the tragedy. As Michael Billington says;

> . . . We are used to seeing Macbeth presented in Stygian gloom: here is it surrounded by colour and light.[50]

Most English productions of the play choose the colours of black and white, which is supposed to present "Stygian gloom". But as even in *Jigoku e* (the picture of hell by *yamato-e*) Japanese people see plenty of lights and colours.

Nunn's *Macbeth* is also dark in colour. The Witches wear dirty ragged clothes of a muddy colour as most of the Witches in *Macbeth* productions do, and the tone of the whole production is very dark. In contrast, Ninagawa's *Macbeth* is bright, full of light and shining colour. Even the Witches wear beautiful costumes of *kimono*. Vivid colour and light usually give the impression of merriness and cheer, but not the sense of terror or danger. However, while the tone of Nunn's *Macbeth* gives the audience the austere quiet and fear in darkness, Ninagawa's production shows the incessant succession of human acts even under the sun of broad daylight.

d) The simplicity of Nunn's *Macbeth* and the spectacularization of Ninagawa's

Richard David says about Nunn's production:

> The absence of the spectacular was made good by an unusual intensity in the acting, only possible in conditions of such close intimacy where speech could be strong without necessarily being loud and action violent without becoming, in the bad sense, theatrical.[51]

Nunn's production is based on its simplicity, as it is produced for the smallest studio theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The audience can hear almost a whisper of the actors and see a slight change of their expressions in seats close to the stage. This brings "an unusual intensity" to the production.

In such a big theatre as the National Theatre in London or the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo, where Ninagawa's was staged, spectacle is necessary to show the dynamism of the play.

In the case of Nunn's production, however, the smallness of the theatre makes the director simplify the production and he exploits the simplicity to make the production successful.

Here is an example from the two productions: when Macbeth appears on stage with two bloody daggers in his hands, Ian Mckellen's Macbeth shakes his hands minutely with fear. This makes a subtle rattling noise in front of the audience sitting closely to the stage, holding their breath. It makes a great effect in such a small studio theatre, where the audience can hear any small whispers of actors.

But this can never be effective in a big theatre. When Mikijiro's Macbeth comes out of Duncan's chamber, most of his long and black wig is soaked with sticky blood, and also his face is exaggeratedly 'gilded' with blood, which is conspicuous even from the audience sitting far away from the stage. In this way, what can be effective in a small theatre cannot be always effective in a big theatre.

Unlike Nunn's, Ninagawa's actors have to play more dynamically, in David's word above, "theatrically". He uses *kabuki* actors for the Witches. They play on a big stage, waving their arms, shaking their heads, dancing and delivering their speeches as if they were singing. This type of spectacle often makes a production seem vulgar as William Davenant's production in the 17th century was bitterly criticized by his contemporary Dryden while praised by Samuel Pepys.[52] What is special about Ninagawa's use of spectacle is, compared to the magnificent intensity that Nunn's simplicity creates, the whole concept which the production shows in its Japanese context: the big framework of the Buddhist altar, the sitting Old Ladies who watch "the story of the dead" as audience, and the incessant fall of cherry blossoms symbolizing the transient world where men live . . .

All these kinds of additional interpretative strands do not exaggerate the world of the tragedy, but make it dynamic. While Nunn's production presents the minute psychological tension with its simplicity, Ninagawa shows the dynamic scale of *Macbeth*'s world with its multiple dimensions.

e) The acting of Ian McKellen and Mikijiro Hira

Due to the large linguistic difference between Japanese and English, it is difficult to compare the acting of Ian McKellen and Mikijiro Hira. However, when the audience observe their acting from the viewpoint of the character of Macbeth, they will find some emphasized aspects of their character. Des Christy says, "Ian McKellen is full of frenzied energy"[53] and John Barber says, his "reptilian look and his quivering facial muscles and back of-the-throat voice"[54] imply "the mind full of scorpions".[55] Ian McKellen's Macbeth expresses the aspect of a man in agony. He has had so many sleepless nights with fear and all sorts of 'horrible imaginings', which give him a look of frenzy.

On the other hand, Mikijiro Hira's acting is based on the emotion of sorrow. He sheds tears when he is in despair. He cries, pitying himself like a child, asking for his mother's care. He cries with his audience and the two bystanders of Old Ladies in sympathy. He always seems to try to share his sorrow or pity rather than agony with them.

When Michael Billington says, "the play seems less an anatomy of evil than a lament for the waste and destructiveness of vaulting ambition"[56] in this production, he includes Macbeth's 'lamenting' way of acting as well as the background of Ninagawa's direction. While, on the stage, falling cherry blossoms suggest the lament for the transient world, and the Buddhist altar shows how short human lives will be in its miniatured world of human history, Mikijiro's Macbeth grieves over his misfortunes and his own life.

Keith Brace reports that:

> . . . Ian McKellen's Macbeth I found deeply compelling and chilling. There was an early hint of the noble popular warrior . . . . . Booted, cloaked, hair slicked like a 1930s Fascist, he was a notable and frightening Macbeth.[57]

McKellen's Macbeth has a "frightening" aspect, which gives the production a sense of suspense and intensity. His expression of fear in the banquet scene is true to life: "the long jaw slackens and judders, the cheeks puff in and out like bellows, the mouth foams as a once whole man is reduced to epileptic frenzy".[58] He sees what the audience do not see and feels a fear that he transfers to the audience. The fear made by the imagination of the playwright and the actor is compellingly transmitted to them in the intimacy of the small theatre.

Hira's Macbeth, however, partly because of the scale of the theatre, expresses his fear in a different way from McKellen. He behaves like a frightened child, rather than a frightening, 'fear-transmitting' person. The audience feels pity for the intimidated child, rather than sharing fear with him.

In contrast to Ian McKellen's Macbeth, who shows the minute psychological movement shared with the audience in the closed space, Hira's Macbeth presents the big wave of his changing emotions. And instead of relying on the intensity of an actor's acting in an empty space, Ninagawa adds the visual setting to the stage to show his inner self from outside.

(2) Similarities

a) The idea of bystanders in the productions

Interestingly, both of the productions have bystanders, or onlookers beside the players who act on the central stage. In Ninagawa's production, they are created characters, Old Ladies, who eat and drink as ordinary people coming to see some casual performance in days gone by. They are emotionally committed to the players on the central stage, but they are completely like an audience, not living in the world of the play.

In Nunn's, however, the characters in the play become players and onlookers during the performance. They sit around the stage in their stage costumes, watching the other actors' playing without any emotional commitment. Nunn minimizes the number of characters, and his staging also helps to save time for the actors to come to the stage. But while the actors do not play on stage, the audience see them sitting as another kind of audience watching the players on the central stage. This has an effect on the production.

In contrast to Nunn's 'onlookers', who do not show their emotion, Ninagawa's Old Ladies cry and laugh with the players on stage. They are living in a completely different world from the players, so that they can freely express their feelings. As Nunn's actors are committed to the players on the central stage and they are a part of them, they look emotionally cool to the players. They watch them like supernatural beings or some sort of fatal power, which handles the players' fortune from outside the world. They sometimes look judgmental of the action the players are taking, and sometimes piteous. They change their looks according to the response of the audience.

Ninagawa's Old Ladies are not like Nunn's. They have a clearer relationship to the players on stage. They are, first of all, the representatives of the audience. They represent the exaggerated emotion of the audience, who react to the players on stage. Secondly, they transfer the players' emotions to the audience in such a big space where the audience find it difficult to sense the players' delicate change of emotions far away from the stage.

But the simplest idea about 'onlookers' in the production of *Macbeth* is, probably, to observe the hero, who is handled by crucial fate, from the position at a distance around him. The onlookers both in Ninagawa's and Nunn's give the audience this kind of viewpoint, which makes the audience free to observe him in an objective way as one individual person, who is exactly the same as every one of the audience.

b) The non-pessimistic ending in the productions

The atmosphere that pervades a stage at the end of a production is very important to decide if the production was successful or not. The audience understands that the production gives them a striking impression by the quietness after all the actors disappear from the stage.

It is a kind of message that a director intends to send to the audience what they feel in the quietness and darkness after the stage. It is a meaningful moment when the audience become one within the atmosphere that the director creates for his sending message, and it, in most productions, defines the quality of the production.

In this sense, both productions have a very special kind of atmosphere in their endings. Nunn's has a strong power of intensity, which keeps the audience inside the play even long after the stage is finished. Ninagawa's spectacle enchants the audience with the

dreamlike beauty of the stage and the dynamic sound of classical music along with the nostalgic tone of a temple gong, which certainly keep the audience away from real life.

In poor productions, where no more than bloody murders take place and dead bodies lie everywhere on stage, the audience only feel that they have seen too much killing during two hours and they do not remember anything at all afterwards. It gives the audience a sense of emptiness, or a desperate idea of the world. Or in other productions, directors may intentionally show the pessimistic side of the play. In such productions, Macbeth becomes a hopeless villain, who is only destined to have a routine life of 'tomorrow' in despair.

In both Ninagawa's and Nunn's productions, however, the directors never give the audience a sense of hopelessness at the end of the play. In Ninagawa's, when the altar doors are closed on stage, and the Old Ladies pray with their hands together in front of the altar, the audience feel, in a deep sense of nostalgia, that the life story of a man is now finished in peace. It is a peaceful ending rather than a cruel, sanguineous, infertile one. It is not pessimism about humanity that Ninagawa presents with his production of *Macbeth*, or the desolate description of the human world. In Ninagawa's world, everything is so vivid and lively, full of energy, which is far from the concept of despair.

Also in Nunn's *Macbeth*, even after all sorts of killing and horrifying sight of black magic, the praise of humanity still remains, even stronger at the end. The audience feel some sort of relief when they see the hero die on stage. The strong intensity piercing through the production, at the moment of his death, liberates the agony of the hero and that of the audience, who have been sharing his suffering with great tension during the play. The grave ceremony, where Malcolm takes Macbeth's crown in the silence of people, is, at the same time, mourning for the dead to the audience. It is a peaceful moment when everything

is settled. No fighting, no killing, at least, at this very moment. The production certainly gives a cathartic impression, but not a pessimistic one, to the audience.

c) The religious aspect of the productions

Trevor Nunn sought for the ideal production of *Macbeth* before he staged the Other Place version in 1976. He directed the play two years before in the main theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. That was regarded as "an over elaborate religious spectacle".[59]

He removed the spectacular aspect for the staging at the Other Place, but some religious dimension still remains in the characterization of King Duncan or the tone of music. While Nunn emphasizes the Christian side of the play according to the original text, Ninagawa dynamically changes the religious base of the play into the Japanese religious mentality of Buddhism.

Ninagawa's intention was, as I explained in Chapter II, to replace the mental background of the West and the East for the Japanese audience to understand the play more in a related sense with themselves. And the result is that, while the production visually becomes familiar to the audience, it widens the scope of the drama into another dimension.

In Nunn's production, Duncan is described as a holy man, wearing a priest-like white robe. He prays while the Witches cast a spell. This symbolizes that Macbeth kills a sacred man, who is loved by God and people, so that the murder he commits is the most sinful crime against God. His crime is, as Macduff refers to it, "Most sacriligious murder". (II. iii. 69)

There is a strong framework of good and evil or a clear vertical axis of heaven and hell through the production in its Christian context. The Witches are devils, and while

Duncan is described as a holy man of virtue, Macbeth is a man tempted by the devils into hell. Light and darkness are quite clear in this kind of world.

Ninagawa's concept of good and evil is more vague. There is no clear distinction between them. The world inside the Buddhist altar covers up everything in its chaos, forgiving a sinful people living and dying in its world all together. Sins and murders take place in broad daylight under the breathtaking beauty of falling cherry blossoms. The Witches wear the glittering colour of *kimono*, dancing enchantingly with fans of gold. In his world, God, a judge, never exists. Everything shines under the sun.

However different their religious concepts may be, it is important to emphasize the religious aspect of the play when it is staged. It gives another dimension to the play, which makes the world of *Macbeth* deeper than the one without the religious viewpoint.

As always in tragedies, there are two levels of the world: Men and God(s). Men always try to perform their own will and God leads their fate. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, unlike Greek tragedies, the role of God to the drama is hidden far behind the hero's will to take actions even if he mentions his fear of God many times in his speeches:

> . . . , or Heaven's cherubim, horsed
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye
> That tears shall drown the wind. (I. vii. 22-25)

And also after the murder of Duncan in his 'Amen' speech, Macbeth shows his fear of God.

Whether judging or forgiving, it is more like the salvation of a soul, purified through the hell of agony, and in Ninagawa's interpretation, it is gentle forgiveness, or merciful comfort, that the religious direction of those productions give to the audience.

d) The acting of Judi Dench and Komaki Kurihara

Inevitably, the performance of Lady Macbeth has a great influence on the success of a production of *Macbeth*. There is no excellent performance of *Macbeth* without good acting of Lady Macbeth as the hero's counterpart.

Judi Dench and Komaki Kurihara are different types of actresses, but both of them have a strong presence on stage. They show their sexual attractiveness to their husbands and the audience. They behave elegantly like flowers in the first half of the productions and later in their madness show their strong mind disturbed by their deed and desolation.

In her sleepwalking scene, Judi Dench's Lady Macbeth makes a long, soulful cry. It seems to last for minutes. It is not a 'sigh' but a chanting-like cry with a long deep breath. It is so striking that the Doctor no longer needs to say, "What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged". (V. I. 51)

Komaki Kurihara's sleepwalking scene is also compelling. She rolls on stage with her hair untied. The long black hair covers up her face distorted with mental illness. She wipes off invisible blood from her hands with her hair, giving the audience the sense of her destructive image of herself.

The fall of Lady Macbeth heightens the pitch of the drama. Macbeth soon follows her fate. After the sleepwalking scene, she disappears from the stage and "then is heard no more". She leaves the audience her last image in the acting of the scene.

Both actresses, Dench and Kurihara, play striking Ladies. They help the productions enhance their intensity. They are both 'unsex'-ed, strong-minded ladies but keep the elegance of their femininity in their own way.

e) The stream of the plot---vitalized by the productions

In *Macbeth*, there is an intense stream of a plot, which evokes some kind of excitement from the viewer or the reader of the story. Events take place one after another without stopping until the play reaches the climax of the story---the 'tomorrow' speech and the hero's death. It excites the reader and the audience even if they have read or seen the play so many times. But the case is different particularly when it is performed on stage.

In the first half of the play, for example, there is a climax in the murder of King Duncan. The wave starts from the introductory part of the play: the prophecies of the Witches, the realization of one of them, and Lady Macbeth's reading Macbeth's letter and her incantation. The hero hesitates to take the action in his thoughts and in front of his wife, and in the end, the murder takes place in its intensified atmosphere of the climax. The banquet scene is the second climax in the first half, and this starts showing the mental decline of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

In the second half of the play, the murders of Macduff's family take place as the first step toward the climax of the hero's fall. And the second step, which is more intensified than the first one, is Lady Macbeth's madness scene. In the final movement, the 'tomorrow' speech concludes the life of the hero "full of sound and fury".

All these events occur within a short time with strong intensity like a thunderstorm. The play holds this explosive power in itself, and it must be shown in every production on stage.

Let us consider the two productions of Nunn and Ninagawa.

In Nunn's, the intensity that goes toward the murder of Duncan is splendid. Ian McKellen's Macbeth shows his great perturbation when the first prophecy of the Witches comes true, and Lady Macbeth receives the news, reading a letter from him excitedly

almost without consulting it, conveying that she has read it so many times she knows it by heart.

In the small space where the audience could hear a pin drop, the murder of Duncan takes place inside the stage. It is something like a murder in the next room to the audience. The intensity is marvellous. And in the banquet scene, the second climax in the first half, the acting of McKellen is shown at his best. The murder of Lady Macduff's son emphasizes the brutality of Macbeth, and the brilliance of Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene leads the play dynamically into the fall of the hero. Every event and every climax in the stream of the plot is perfectly effected and vitalized.

In Ninagawa's, as well, though, in the spectacle of the play, the stream shows a more dynamic wave of change than Nunn's, the climaxes are perfectly organized, which gives the production consistency and intensity.

Both of the productions are successful in their vitalization of the text and its plot. They excite and thrill the audience in each climax of the story, never make them feel bored before the end of the performance.

* * * * *

Trevor Nunn's and Yukio Ninagawa's *Macbeths* are extremely different types of productions. But we have got a sense of what is a successful production of the play or what kind of production can be exciting to the audience. It is not the difference of language, or the style of direction, but something else that excites the audience.

To convey the essence of the text for a performance on stage is not an easy thing. But the most important thing is how to energize the story according to its climaxes and the whole concept of the play. For that, it is needless to say, the intensity of acting and the

objective view of a director are both indispensable. Ninagawa says, " I always want the eyes of a bird flying in the sky and of a worm crawling on the ground".[60]

CONCLUSION

I have discussed the two Japanese cultural adaptations of *Macbeth*: one is a film, made by Akira Kurosawa, and the other one is a stage production, directed by Yukio Ninagawa. Those two directors show that Shakespeare can be culturally translated into other styles, and even more, Shakespeare can give us a stronger impression in a different background.

What is the meaning of intercultural performances? The answer is to create the power that the other western productions cannot produce when they consider too much the authenticity of language and texts. If they stick too earnestly to the idolized image of his works, they may lose the essential power that his texts used to have in his own age to his own audience.

Dennis Kennedy says in the afterword of his book *Foreign Shakespeare*:

> . . . Perhaps intercultural performances, ... , can teach us how to regain some of what we have lost, as those foreigners Brecht and Kott did after the war. The most extreme examples of foreign Shakespeare can show us what we miss most of all in the Anglo-American theatre: the power of danger, the cruelty of power, the real prospect that a dead English playwright might still shake audiences to the bone, . . .[1]

Kurosawa creates the compelling intensity of the story, though it is a complete adaptation of the play, and Ninagawa produces the spectacular fantasy that can compete with one of the most successful English productions of *Macbeth*, even without his language, the cultural adaptations of Shakespeare have proved that they "shake audiences to the bone".

For western audiences, therefore, it is a revitalization of Shakespeare to see foreign productions of his plays. Audiences always expect something new from those visually and linguistically reformed Shakespearean productions.

For eastern audiences, however, it is the familiarization of Shakespeare. While most Shakespearean productions in Japan are staged with western costumes in western cultural background, to see Ninagawa's Japanese style of Shakespeare is a new experience for Japanese audience and a fresh way to approach his plays. Shakespeare in our familiar background: that is the real impression to the Japanese audience.

The East imports the West and transforms the western backbone of culture, thoughts or religion by its own interpretation. And the West imports the East again as the renovation of their culture. In this respect, it is the true cultural encounter of the East and the West to recreate Shakespeare's plays into the eastern forms and reconsider the various kinds of possibilities of the interpretation of his plays.

In many foreign countries, Shakespeare is still read and interpreted in many ways according to their own cultural, philosophical, political, or religious backgrounds. Those foreign productions tell us how Shakespeare is familiar to many people in foreign countries. If they have an extreme difference of culture from Shakespeare's, their interpretation also becomes diverse from the original. In this sense, the eastern culture still has a lot of new things to show to western audiences. And the western people must try to find out what the eastern directors have found out in Shakespeare's plays. It is interesting to know that what they have found through their eastern interpretation of his plays could be the most essential meanings that the western people might have forgotten for a long time.

In Japan, there is also a long history of reading Shakespeare and transmitting him to our own culture. Kurosawa and Ninagawa are not the first people that have tried to do it. Linguistically, we are more free and ready to accept his meaning beyond words. Japanese children are never forced to read Shakespeare in school, though they must study other Japanese old-style of writings for exams. They willingly read Shakespeare, probably with

far fewer difficulties than English school children have. We cannot ignore these 'readers', who create their own reading by adjusting Shakespeare to their own cultural background.

By seeing the eastern productions, therefore, it is useful to pay attention to the eastern reading of Shakespeare's plays, not only to enjoy the visual amusement of the eastern culture: that is to discover a new way of approaching Shakespeare, who gives us a global and inexhaustible source of ideas about human life and nature.

NOTES

Introduction

[1] Donald Richie, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), p. 117

[2] Yukio Ninagawa, *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1988), p. 163

[3] Dennis Kennedy, *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 5-16

[4] *Ibid.* p. 292,

Chapter I

[1] The background music for the Noh theatre.

[2] Mainly ghost stories such as *Yotsuya Kaidan.*

[3] From the subtitles of the videotape of the film. (Toho, 1957)

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] "Sengoku" period.

[6] Charles Bazerman, "Time in Play and Film: *Macbeth* and *Throne of Blood*" in *Literature/ Film Quartery* 5, no. 4, 1977, p. 334

[7] The Oxford Shakespeare, ed. Nicholas Brooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) The quotations from the text in this thesis are from this edition.

[8] See J. Blumenthal, "*Macbeth* into *Throne of Blood*", in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Gerald Mast and Marshal Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974)

[9] The English translation of the film is from Hisae Niki, *Seven Samurai and Other Screenplays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992) The quotation from this book is shown by page numbers in this thesis.

[10] See J. Blumenthal, "*Macbeth* into *Throne of Blood*", p. 344

[11] John Gerlach, "A Response to J. Blumenthal" in *Literature/ Film Quarterly* 1, no. 4, 1973, p. 353

[12] See Akiko Baba, *Oni no Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunko, 1976)

[13] *Ibid.* And also see Kazuhiko Komatsu, *Byorei Shinko Ron* (Tokyo: Arina Shobo, 1984)

[14] John Gerlach, "A Response to J. Blumenthal", p. 353

[15] In the screenplay, they are called *shibito-so*, which means 'dead men's weeds'. It is thought to be a popular name for *higan-bana* (a cluster-amaryllis; *Lycoris radiata*). The Japanese commemorate the dead during the autumn equinoctial week (*higan*) and the flowers come out just around the week, and their red colour is sometimes associated with the blood of the dead.

[16] The image of horses coming in and out of the mist is one of Kurosawa's favourite shots.

[17] Charles Bazerman, "Time in Play and Film: *Macbeth* and *Throne of Blood*" in *Literature Film Quarterly*, 5, no. 4, 1977, p. 236

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] See G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire* (London: Routledge, 1961), p. 153: "This is the moment of the birth of evil in Macbeth---he may have had ambitious thoughts before, may even have intended the murder, but now for the first time he feels its oncoming reality".

[20] Tadao Sato, *Kurosawa Akira Kaidai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), p. 326

[21] Translated by Hisae Niki, *Throne of Blood* in *Seven Samurai and Other Screenplays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 235. 'Five desires (*goyoku*)' is a Buddhist term: appetite, sexual desire, desire for sleep, money and social ambition.

[22] Robert Hapgood, "Kurosawa's Shakespeare Films: *Throne of Blood*, *The Bad Sleep Well* and *Ran*" in *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: the Plays on Film and Television*, ed. by Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 236

[23] Hisae Niki, "Kurosawa's *Kumonosu-jo*: A Japanese *Macbeth*", in *Shakespeare Studies* (Japan), 7, 1968, p. 46

[24] Kunio Komparu, *The Noh Theatre: Principles and Perspectives* (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, inc., 1983), p. 18

[25] *Ibid.* p. 221

[26] See Akira Kurosawa, *Something Like an Autobiography*, trans. by Audie E. Bock (New York: Random House, 1983). The image of the rural village seems to come from the one where the director grew up.

[27] Thomas De Quincey, "On the Knocking on the Gate in *Macbeth*" in *Shakespeare:Macbeth* ed. by John Wain (London: MacMillan, 1968)

[28] Tadao Sato, *Kurosawa Akira no Sekai* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun Sha, 1986), p.253

[29] Kunio Komparu, *Noh e no Izanai: Johakyu to Ma no Saiensu* (Tokyo: Tankosha, 1980), p. 191

[30] *Ibid.* p. 203

[31] *Ibid.* p. 220

[32] *Ibid.* p. 70

[33] Zeami (1363-1443): A brilliant actor, playwright, and critic, who established Noh as a classic theatrical art.

[34] Kunio Komparu, *Noh e no Izanai*, p. 73

[35] Tadao Sato, *Kurosawa Akira no Sekai*, p. 255

[36] *Ibid.* p. 256

[37] *Ibid.* p. 256

[38] Kunio Komparu, *Noh e no Izanai*, p. 60

[39] Stephen Spender, "Time, Violence and *Macbeth*" in *Macbeth*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1991), p. 43

[40] John Gerlach, "Shakespeare, Kurosawa, and *Macbeth*: *A Response to J. Blumenthal*," in *Literature/ Film Quarterly*, 1, no. 4, 1973, pp. 353-54

[41] Hisae Niki, "Kurosawa's *Kumonosu-jo*: A Japanese *Macbeth*", p. 44

[42] Bernice Kliman, "Visual Poetry in *Throne of Blood*", in *Literary Review*, 22, 1979, p. 475

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] About the symmetrical composition of the scene, see Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema* (London: Scolar Press, 1979), p.314

[45] Akira Kurosawa, *Zenshu Kurosawa Akira Dai 4 Kan* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), p. 354

[46] Kazuhiko Komatsu, *Byorei Shinko Ron* (Tokyo: Arina Shobo, 1984), p. 245

[47] Jack J. Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 153-59

[48] *Ibid.* p. 153

[49] *Ibid.* p. 158

[50] *Ibid.* p. 159

[51] *Ibid.* p. 158

[52] See *Kurosawa Akira Kaidai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990). Olivier praised it, asking Kurosawa whether he could use the idea for his own version of *Macbeth.*

[53] A. L. Zambrano, "*Throne of Blood:*Kurosawa's *Macbeth*", in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 2, no. 3, 1974, pp. 273-74

[54] Donald Richie,

[55] J. Blumenthal, "*Macbeth* into *Throne of Blood*", in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Gerald Mast and Marshal Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 340-51

[56] *Ibid.* p. 349

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] *Ibid.* p. 351

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Akira Kurosawa, *Zenshu Kurosawa Akira Dai 4 Kan*, p. 351

[61] It is often mentioned that in the film there is no comical element, which is given by the Porter in the play, but the guard in this scene seems like a comic role, though he does not show so much foolery.

[62] Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, p. 310

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] Jack J. Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film*, p. 103

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] Akira Kurosawa, *Throne of Blood*, in *Seven Samurai and Other Screenplays*, p.265

[68] All the other scenes are taken by non-close-up shots, which gives the impression to the viewer that they observe the hero not from his inside but away from him.

[69] Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, p. 316

[70] *Ibid.* p. 317

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] A. L. Zambrano, "*Throne of Blood*: Kurosawa's *Macbeth*", p. 271

[75] Kunio Komparu, *Noh e no Izanai*, p. 49

[76] *Ibid.*

[77] Tadao Sato, *Kurosawa Akira no Sekai*, p. 252

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] Akira Kurosawa, *Something Like an Autobiography*, p. 147

[80] A. L. Zambrano, "*Throne of Blood*: Kurosawa's *Macbeth.*"

[81] About Kurosawa's replacement of the poetical image of the original play, see J. Blumenthal, "*Macbeth* into *Throne of Blood.*"

Chapter II

[1] Yukio Ninagawa, *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1988), p. 163

[2] See Yukio Ninagawa, *Sen no Knife, Sen no Mimi* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 1993), p. 140

[3] *The Asahi Shinbun*, February 8, 1980

[4] *The Nihon Keizai Shinbun Evening Press*, February 23, 1980

[5] Yukio Ninagawa, *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 163

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 151

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.* p. 160

[12] In *Preludes* in *Prufrock and Other Observations 1917*: "Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;/ The worlds revolve like ancient women/ Gathering fuel in vacant lots." From *The Complete Poems of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 23

[13] *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 163

[14] See James R. Brandon, *Studies in Kabuki* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978)

[15] See Akiko Baba, *Oni no Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunko, 1976)

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] c.f. Momoo Yamaguchi, *A Cultural Dictionary of Japan* (Tokyo: The Japan Times, 1979)

[18] Yukio Ninagawa, *Sen no Knife Sen no Mimi*, p. 218

[19] *The Guardian*, September 19, 1987

[20] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, trans. Yushi Odashima (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1983)

[21] John Russell Brown, *Focus on Macbeth* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 76

[22] *Ibid.* p. 79

[23] *The Guardian*, September 19, 1987

[24] *The Times*, September 18, 1987

[25] The song is called "Karasu no ko" (A baby crow).

[26] man skilled in espionage activities.

[27] *The Times*, September 18, 1987

[28] *The Asahi Evening Press*, December 8, 1987

[29] See Chapter II, p. 43.

[30] *The Guardian*, September 19, 1987

[31] *The Times*, September 18, 1987

[32] Dennis Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and the Players* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 216

[33] *Ibid.* p. 217

[34] Yukio Ninagawa, *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 163

[35] John Masefield, *A* Macbeth *Production* (London: William Heinemann, 1945), p.32

[36] Richard David, "The Tragic Curve" in *Shakespeare Survey 9* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 131

[37] See *Studies in Kabuki*.

[38] About the psychical correspondence between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, see Sigmund Freud, "Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytical Work" in *Shakespeare*: Macbeth, ed. John Wain (London: MacMillan, 1968), p. 131-38. He says, "they are both copied from a single prototype".

[39] It is added by the director.

[40] *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 163

[41] See Capter II, p. 46.

[42] *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 154

[43] *Ibid.* p. 163

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Yukio Ninagawa, *Sen no Knife, Sen no Mimi*, p. 218

[46] *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 159

[47] *The Asahi Evening Press*, February 8, 1980

[48] Sigmund Freud, "Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytical Work" in *Shakespeare*: Macbeth, ed. John Wain (London: MacMillan, 1968), p. 134

[49] See the quotation of a Japanese poem in Chapter II, p. 46

[50] *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 158

[51] *The Times*, September 18, 1987

[52] It literally means 'new drama'.

[53] *The Times*, September 18, 1987

[54] See the quotation of Motojiro Kajii's novel in Chapter II, p. 46.

[55] *The Guardian*, September 19, 1987

[56] Ninagawa's idea about audience: See Chapter II, p. 42-43.

[57] *The Times*, September 18, 1987

[58] Akihiko Senda, "Kaidan to shite no Sekaizo: Ninagawa Yukio Ron" in *Ninagawa Yukio:Note 1969-1988*, p. 320

[59] *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988*, p. 163

[60] *The Guardian*, September 19, 1987

Chapter III

[1] Geoffrey Reeves, "Finding Shakespeare on Film: From an Interview with Peter Brook", in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Gerald Mast and Marshal Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 316

[2] Frances K. Barasch, "Revisionist Art: *Macbeth* on Film", in *The University of Dayton Review*, ed. by Robert C. Conard (winter, 1979-80, vol. 14), p. 16

[3] *Ibid.* p. 15

[4] Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation* (London & Sydney: Croomhelm, 1986), p. 15

[5] Especially in *Mono-no-ke* (the forest spirit)'s song.

[6] Jack Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film*, p. 153

[7] *Ibid.* p. 151

[8] Frances K. Barasch, "Revisionist Art: *Macbeth* on Film", p. 17

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Joseph McBride, *Orson Welles* (London: Secker and Warburg Ltd, 1972), p.116

[11] James Naremore, "The Walking Shadow: The Welles's Expressionist *Macbeth*", in *Literature/ Film Quarterly*, 1, no. 4, 1973, p. 362

[12] Normand Berlin, "*Macbeth*: Polanski and Shakespeare", in *Literature/ Film Quarterly*, 1, no. 4, 1973, p. 294. It says, "his complete one-ness with the witches".

[13] Jack Jorgens, "The Opening Scene of Polanski's *Macbeth*", in *Literature/ Film Quarterly*, 3, no. 3, 1975, p. 278

[14] Normand Berlin states in "*Macbeth*: Polanski and Shakespeare" that this indicates the fairness and foulness in the witches.

[15] E. Pearlman, "*Macbeth* on Film: Politics" in *Shakespeare Survey* 39, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 71

[16] *Ibid.* p. 73

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.* p. 72

[19] Kenneth S. Rothwell, "Roman Polanski's *Macbeth*: Golgotha Triumphant", in *Literature/ Film Quarterly* 1, 1973, p. 75

[20] Virginia Wright Wexman, "*Macbeth* and Polanski's Theme of Regression", in *The University of Dayton Review*, p. 85

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Jack J. Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film*, p. 174

[23] *Ibid.* p. 174

[24] Anthony Davies, *Filming Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 83

[25] Frances K. Barasch, "Revisionist Art: *Macbeth* on Film", p. 15

[26] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 305

[27] See Chapter I, p. 33.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 325: "The idea constantly recurs that Macbeth's new honours sit ill upon him, like a loose and badly fitting garment, belonging to someone else."

[30] Normand Berlin, "*Macbeth*: Polanski and Shakespeare", p. 292-93

[31] H. R. Coursen, "*Macbeth*: Polanski's Disastrous Version", in *Shakespeare on Film Newsletter* 3, no. 1, 1978, p. 4

[32] Barbara Leaming, *Polanski: His Life and Films* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982), p. 79

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.* p. 80. Tynan's observation.

[36] *Ibid.* p. 81

[37] See Dennis Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and the Players* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). The vulnerable and feminine types of Lady Macbeth such as Helen Faucit, Ellen Terry, Violet Vanbrugh, etc.

[38] Barbara Leaming, *Polanski: His Life and Films*, p. 79

[39] H. R. Coursen, "*Macbeth*: Polanksi's Disastrous Version", p. 5

[40] Roger Manvell, *Shakespeare and the Film* (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 59-60

[41] See Peter Cowie, *A Ribbon of Dreams: The Cinema of Orson Welles* (London: The Tantivy Press, 1978), p. 111

[42] Roger Manvell, *Shakespeare and the Film*, p. 60

[43] James Naremore, "The Walking Shadow: Welles's Expressionist *Macbeth*", p.363

[44] Peter Cowie, *A Ribbon of Dreams*, p. 108

[45] *The Daily Telegraph*, September 11, 1976

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] It is characteristic of the translator to use Japanese puns (*dajare*) in the replacement for Shakespeare's.

[48] See Chapter II.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *The Guardian*, September 19, 1987

[51] See *Macbeth and the Players*.

[52] See *Macbeth and the Players*, p. 16.

[53] *The Chronicle & Echo* (Northampton), September 13, 1976

[54] *The Daily Telegraph*, September 11, 1976

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *The Guardian*, September 19, 1987

[57] *The Birmingham Post*, September 13, 1976

[58] *The Guardian*, September 11, 1976

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Yukio Ninagawa, *Ninagawa Yukio: Note 1969-1988* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1988), p. 163

Conclusion

[1] Dennis Kennedy, *Foreign Shakespeare*, p. 301

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------- and Masato Harada. *Kurosawa Akira Kataru*. Tokyo: Fukutake Shoten, 1991.

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